Studies of Paris

De Amicis

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Constantinople. 8vo, cloth, $1 50.

DE AMICIS is one of the strongest and most brilliant of the present generation of Italian writers, and this latest work from his pen, as well from the picturesqueness of its descriptions, as for its skillful analysis of the traits and characteristics of the medley of races represented in the Turkish capital, possesses an exceptional interest and value.

"The most picturesque and entertaining volume contained in the recent literature on the Eastern question."—*Boston Journal.*

"A remarkable work * * * the author is a poet, an artist, a wonder-worker in words * * * his descriptions are given with rare skill."—*N. Y. Post.*

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS. NEW YORK.

STUDIES OF PARIS

BY

EDMONDO DE AMICIS

Author of "CONSTANTINOPLE."

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

By W. W. CADY

THIRD EDITION

NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
27 & 29 W. 23D STREET
1882

Press of
G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York

FROM THE AUTHOR.

To Miss Cady,

Dear Madam:

I thank you for the kindness with which you judge my poor books, and for the honor you do me in translating them. You are at liberty to translate any of those which most please you, and to have them printed in America, where and by whom you choose. I give you the fullest freedom in the use of them, without any restrictions or conditions

Accept the assurance of my esteem and sincere gratitude.

Very truly, yours,

Edmondo de Amicis.

Piscina-Piedmont,
17*th June*, 1879.

CONTENTS.

STUDIES OF PARIS.

I

THE FIRST DAY IN PARIS.

Paris, 28th June, 1878.

Here I am caught once more in this vast gilded net, into which one is drawn again and again, whether willing or not. The first time I remained here four months, thoroughly dissatisfied with myself, and glad to make my escape, but now that I return somewhat older and more mature and settled, I see the fault lay in myself, for woe to him who comes to Paris too young, and without any fixed aim in view, his head filled with vague notions and his pockets empty! Now I see Paris calmly—in company with a dear friend, whose presence aids me in feeling more freshly and vividly all my impressions of the former visit.

Here are those of the first day as they can be rendered by a weary brain and a pen borrowed from the landlord.

Before being taken to the Exposition, the reader must enter Paris with us. Let us give a glance at the theatre before turning to the stage.

We have arrived at the Lyons station, at eight o'clock in the morning, and the weather is most beautiful. Here we find ourselves suddenly embarrassed. We had read in the newspapers that the cabmen of Paris pushed their presumption to such a point, that they were not willing to carry fat people, so I observed to Giacosa that we two were made on purpose to provoke and justify a disdainful refusal from the most courteous of the cabmen. To make matters worse, we both wore dusters which added most discouragingly to our size. What were we to do? There was nothing to be done, but try and produce a little illusion by approaching the carriage with a mincing step, and summoning the man in a falsetto. The experiment was successful. The cabman glanced at us anxiously, but let us get into the carriage, and then started rapidly for the Boulevards.

We were to go to the Boulevard des Italiens, or in other words, to the centre of Paris, passing through the most noted of her streets.

The first impression is an agreeable one.

It is the large, irregular square of the Bastile, noisy and crowded, into which open four Boulevards and ten streets, and from which one hears the deafening clamor of the immense suburb of St. Antoine. But one is still stunned by the noise of the great, gloomy station, where we arrived worn out and sleepy, and this last Place full of light, these thousand colors, the grand column of July, the trees, the rapid motion of the carriages and the crowd we scarcely see. It is the first quick, deep whiff of Paris life, and we receive it with half-closed eyes. We do not begin to see clearly until we reach the Boulevard Beaumarchais.

Here Paris begins to appear. The wide streets, the double row of trees, the cheerful-looking houses,—everything is neat and fresh, and wears a youthful air. One recognizes at the first glance, a thousand little refinements of comfort and elegance, which reveal a people full of needs and caprices, for whom the superfluous is more indispensable than

the necessary, and who enjoy life in an ingenuous sort of way. There is the *buvette* all resplendent with show-windows and metals, the little café full of elegant pretensions, the small eating house which boasts the delicious delicacies of the great restaurants; and there are a thousand little shops, tidy and smiling, which try to outrival each other by means of colors, exhibits, inscriptions, puppets and little ornaments. Between the two rows of trees is a constant passing and repassing of carriages, great carts and wagons drawn by engines and high omnibuses, laden with people, bounding up and down on the unequal pavement, with a deafening noise. Yet the whole air is different from that of London—the green open place, the faces, the voices, and the colors give to that confusion more the air of pleasure than of work. Then too, the population is not new,—they are all well-known figures that make one smile. There is *Gervais* who stands at the door of the shop with the iron in his hand, and *Monsieur Joyeuse* who goes to the office improvising an amusement, and *Pipilet* reading the Gazette, *Frederick* passing under the window of *Bernerette*, the little dressmaker of Murger, the

pin and needle woman of Koch, the *Gamin* of Victor Hugo, the *Prudhomme* of Monnier, the *Homme d'affaire* of Balzac, and the workingman of Zola. Here they are, all of them! How soon we grasp the fact that although thousands of miles away, we were living within the immense circuit of Paris! It is half-past eight o'clock, and the great day of the great city (a day for Paris, a month for him who arrives) has already begun, as warmly and clamorously as a battle. Beyond the tumult of streets, one hears confusedly the deep voice of the enormous hidden quarters, like the roar of the sea concealed by the dykes. One has scarcely issued from the Boulevard Beaumarchais, and has not yet reached the end of the Boulevard les Filles du Calvaire, when one begins to divine, to feel, to breathe, I was about to say, the immensity of Paris, and one thinks with amazement of those solitary, silent little cities, from which we started, called Turin, Milan and Florence, where every one stands at the shop door, and all seem to live like one great family. Yesterday we were rowing on a small lake, to-day we are sailing on the ocean.

After going a little more than a mile, we enter the

Boulevard du Temple. Here the wide street grows broader still, the side ones lengthen, and the houses rise higher. The grandeur of Paris begins to appear; and so, as we proceed, everything increases in proportion and becomes more impressive. Then we begin to see the theatres, the *Cirque* and *Olympique*, the *Lyrique*, the *Gaîté* and the *Folies*, the elegant cafés, the great shops, the fine restaurants, and the crowd assumes a more thoroughly Parisian aspect. The general commotion is noticeably greater than at ordinary times. Our carriage is obliged to stop every moment to wait until the long line which precedes it is in motion. The omnibuses, of every shape, which seem like perambulating houses, pursue each other madly. The people cross each other, running in every direction, as if playing ball across the street, and on the side walks they pass in two unbroken files. We enter the Boulevard St. Martin. It is another step forward upon this road of elegance and grandeur. The variegated chiosks become thicker, the shops more splendid, and the cafés more pretentious. The little terraces and balconies of the houses are covered with gilded cubital characters, which give

to every façade the air of the frontispiece of an immense book. The theatre fronts, the arches of the arcades, the edifices covered with wood-work up to the second floors, the restaurants which open upon the street in the form of little temples, and the theatres gleaming with mirrors, succeed each other uninterruptedly, each connected with the other like one unending shop. Thousands of ornaments, thousand of nick-nacks, thousands of signs conspicuous, capricious and charlatanlike, protrude, swing, rise on all sides, and gleam confusedly from all heights behind the trees, which extend their leafy branches over the chiosks, the seats on the sidewalks, the little omnibus-stations, the fountains, the tables outside the cafés, the embroidered awnings of the shops, and the marble steps of the theatres. The Boulevard St. Denis succeeds the Boulevard St. Martin. The great street descends, rises, narrows, receives from the large arteries of the populous neighboring quarters crowds of horses and people; and extends before us as far as the eye can reach, swarming with carriages and black with the crowd, divided into three parts by the enormous garlands of verdure, which fill it with shade and

freshness. For three quarters of an hour we have been going step by step, winding in and out and just clearing interminable lines of carriages, which present the appearance of a fabulous nuptial cortege extending from one end of Paris to the other. We enter the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle, and the bustle, hum and noise increase, as does the grandeur of the great shops which line the street with their enormous show windows, the ostentation of the *Réclame* (*i. e.*, signs, advertisements) which climb up from the first floors to the second, to the third, to the cornices, and so to the roofs; the windows become rooms, the precious merchandise is piled up, the many colored placards are multiplied, the walls of the houses disappear under the gleaming decorations, childish and magnificent, which attract and weary the eye. It is not a street through which we are passing, but rather a succession of squares. A single, immense square decked for a fête, and overflowed by a multitude gleaming in quicksilver. Everything is open, transparent and placed in view as at an elegant, great market in the open air. The eye penetrates to the last recesses of the rich shops, to the distant counters of the long, white

and gilded cafés, and into the high rooms of the princely restaurants, embracing at every slight change of direction a thousand beauties, a thousand surprises, a thousand striking minutiæ, an infinite variety of treasures, dainties, playthings, works of art, ruinous trifles and temptations of every kind, from which one can only escape to fall into a like snare on the other side of the street, or by amusing one's self along the two endless rows of chiosks painted with all the colors of a harlequin, and hung with newspapers of every country and form, which give to the great Boulevard the appearance, both strange and attractive, of a great literary fair at carnival. Meanwhile we enter the Boulevard Poissonière from the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle and the spectacle grows more varied, extended and richer. We have already traversed the length of four thousand metres; experiencing more and more a new and lively feeling, which is not only of marvel, but a confused discontent, a regret full of desires, the bitterness of the youth who feels himself humiliated at his first entrance into the world, a species of delusion of *amour propre*, which is expressed in pitiful and irrascible glances at the poverty of his baggage

(exposed to ridicule on the box of the carriage) in the midst of this insolent luxury.

At last, we enter the Boulevard Mont-Martre, which is followed by those of the Italiens, Capucins and Madeleine. Ah! Here is the burning heart of Paris, the high road to mundane triumphs, the great theatre of the ambitions and of the famous dissolutenesses, which draws to itself the gold, vice and folly of the four quarters of the globe.

Here is splendor at its height; this is the metropolis of metropolises, the open and lasting palace of Paris, to which all aspire and everything tends. Here the street becomes a square, the sidewalk a street, the shop a museum, the café a theatre, beauty elegance, splendor dazzling magnificence, and life a fever. The horses pass in troops, and the crowd in torrents. Windows, signs, advertisements, doors, façades, all rise, widen and become silvered, gilded and illumined. It is a rivalry of magnificence and stateliness which borders on madness. There is the cleanliness of Holland and the gayety of color belonging to an oriental bazaar. It seems like one immeasurable hall of an enormous museum, where the gold, gems, laces, flowers, crystals, bronzes,

pictures, all the masterpieces of industry, all the seductions of art, all the finery of riches, and all the caprices of fashion are crowded together and displayed in a profusion which startles, and a grace which enamors. The gigantic panes of glass, the innumerable mirrors, the bright trimmings of wood which extend half way up the edifices, reflect everything. Great inscriptions in gold run along the façades like the verses from the Koran along the walls of the mosques. The eye finds no space upon which to rest. On every side gleam names illustrious in the kingdom of fashion and pleasure, the titles of the restaurants of princes and Crœsuses; and the shops, whose doors one opens with a trembling hand—everywhere an aristocratic luxury, provoking and bold, which says, Spend—Pour out—and Enjoy, and at the same time excites and chafes the desires. Here there is no substantial beauty; it is a species of theatrical and effeminate magnificence, a grandeur of ornamentation, excessive and full of coquetry and pride, which dazzles and confuses like blinding scintillations, and expresses to perfection the nature of a great, opulent and sensual city, living only for pleasure and glory. Here

one feels a certain constraint. It does not seem like passing through a public place, so great is the cleanliness and grandeur. The crowd itself moves there with a certain staid grace, as if in a great hall, gliding over the asphalt without noise, as over a carpet. The shopkeepers stand behind colossal show windows with the dignity of *grands seigneurs*, as if only expecting millionaire purchasers. Even the vendors of newspapers in the chiosks here assume a certain literary air. It seems as if all were conscious of the superiority of the location, and strove to add in their own persons a well toned stroke of the brush to the great picture of the Boulevards. One can in fact collect with the thoughts all the scattered pictures which are to be found in our most flourishing cities; but no one, who has never seen it, will ever be able to represent the spectacle of that living stream which flows without rest between those two interminable walls of glass, amid that verdure and that gold, beside that noisy tumult of horses and wheels, and in that wide street whose end one cannot see; nor form a just idea of the figure, which the miserable valises belonging to us poor *literati* made in its midst.

We had scarcely taken breath at the hotel, when we returned to the Boulevards, before the Café Riche, attracted thither like moths to the light without being fairly aware of it. Strange! It seemed to me as if I had been in Paris for a week. The crowd, however, wears quite a different aspect from that of ordinary times. Foreign faces, travelling costumes, provincial families, weary and surprised, mingle with the dark faces of the South, and the blonde beards and hair of the North. On the bridge at Constantinople one sees all the East pass by, here, all the West. The usual petticoats are lost in that abyss. Now and then one sees a Japanese face, a negro, a turban, an Oriental garb, but these soon disappear in the black flood of the crowd in high hats. I notice many members of that innumerable family of great men who have failed, whom all recognize at the first glance; strange figures with exhausted faces and eye-glasses, dressed in black, very greasy, carrying old useless writings under their arms. Dreamers of all countries come to Paris to tempt the wheel of Fortune with a mechanical invention or a literary masterpiece. This is the great torrent that swallows up mediocre excellence—

provincial "celebrities," and national "illustrations," great personages in gold lace, etc. Princes and rich men, ten for a grazia! (*i. e.* seven centimes.) One sees neither proud faces, nor satisfied vanity. They are all indistinct drops in an inexhaustible wave, upon which only giants can ride—and one understands from what formidable springs, the ambition of glory to rise above this Pandemonium, must receive its impulse, and with what raging obstinacy brains are racked to find words and cries to make the hundred thousand heads of this marvellous throng turn around! One experiences a sensation of pleasure in being there on that pavement scattered with crushed ambitions and dead glories, upon which rise other ambitions, and other forces try their strength without rest. One enjoys being there as if in the midst of a gigantic workshop, vibrating and noisy, to feel one's self joined, even for a little while, as a living molecule, to that great body around which everything gravitates, to breathe a mouthful of air upon that Tower of Babel, taking part from a round of the interminable ladder in the immense work, and comforted by the thought that one can get away from it all in fifteen days.

Then let us take a two hours' drive, describing an immense zig-zag on the right bank of the Seine, in order to see life circulating in the minor arteries of Paris. I see again with intense pleasure that verdant and splendid Boulevard, Sebastopol and Strasbourg, which seems made for the triumphal passage of an army, and that endless Rue Lafayette, in which the two black streams formed by the crowd are lost to view in the dim distance, where it seems as if another metropolis commenced. I pass once more through those immense openings called Boulevard Haussmann, Boulevard Malesherbes, Boulevard Magenta, and Boulevard Prince Eugene, into which one glances with a shudder, as into an abyss, while seizing one's companion by the arm. Let us go to the Rond Point de l'Etoile, to see flying in all directions, like the spokes of an immense wheel, the main streets which divide into fourteen gay, triangular quarters, the tenth part of Paris. Then return to the heart of the city, traverse that inextricable net of small crooked streets, full of noise and crowded with memories whose sudden, malicious turnings prepare the great unexpected views of the cross-roads full of light, and of the

noted streets closed at the end by a magnificent pile, which rises above the city like a mountain of chiselled granite. Everywhere there is a flying about of carriages laden with luggage, and sleepy, dusty faces of the new arrivals, who look out of the windows as if to ask the reason of this chaos. Near the stations there are files of travellers on foot who follow each other, valises in hand, as if one had robbed the other. There is not one moment's repose, either for the ear, for the eye, or the brain. You hope, perhaps, to be able to drink your beer in peace before an almost empty café. Vain illusion! The *Réclame* pursues you. The first passer by puts into your hand a lyric which commences with an invective against the "International Exhibition," and ends by inviting you to purchase an overcoat at Monsieur Armangans, *Coupeur Émérité*. A moment after, you find yourself in possession of a sonnet which promises you a ticket to the Exhibition if you will go and order a pair of shoes in Rue Rougemont. In order to free yourself from this you raise your eyes. Oh, Heavens! A gilded advertising carriage is passing with servants in livery, which offers you high hats at a reduction. Look at the

end of the street. What! Half a mile away there is an advertisement in titanic characters of the *Petit Journal* — "Six thousand copies daily — three million readers!" which affects you like a shriek in your ear. You raise your eyes to Heaven, but, unfortunately, there is no freedom even in Heaven. Above the highest roof of the quarter, is traced in delicate characters against the blue of the sky the name of a cloudland artist who wishes to take your photograph—so of course there is nothing left to do, but fasten your eyes upon the table! No—not even that! The table is divided into so many colored and painted squares, which offer you dyes and pomades—you turn your face angrily around—oh, unfortunate man. The back of the chair recommends to you a glovemaker.

So there is no other refuge from these persecutions except to look at your feet, but alas, there is no refuge here even, for you see stamped upon the asphalt by a stencil plate an advertisement which begs you to dine on home-cooking in Rue Chaussée d'Antin. In walking for half an hour you read, without wishing to do so, half a volume. The whole city, in fact, is an inexhaustible, graphic, variegated

and enormous decoration, aided by grotesque pictures of devils and puppets high as houses, which assail and oppress you, making you curse the alphabet. That *Petit Journal*, for example, covers half of Paris. You must either kill it or buy it. Everything that is put into your hand, from the boat-ticket to the coupon for the chair, upon which you rest your weary bones in the public gardens, conceal the snare of advertisement. Even the walls of the small temples, which you only enter by force, talk of, offer and recommend something. In every corner there are a thousand mouths which call you, and a thousand hands which beckon. It is a net that encircles Paris. You can spend your last centime, believing all the time that you are very economical. Yet how many varieties of objects and sights! In the space of fifteen steps you see a crown of diamonds, an enormous bunch of camelias, a pile of live turtles, an oil painting, a couple of automatic young women, who are swimming in a lake of tin, a complete suit of clothes to content a man, "most scrupulously elegant," for eight francs and fifty centimes, a number of the *Journal des Abrutis*, with an important article on the exhibitions of cows,

a cabinet for experiments of the phonograph, and a shopkeeper who is flying feathered butterflies to attract the children who are passing by. At every step you see all the illustrious faces of France. There is no city which equals Paris in this kind of exposition. Hugo, Augier, Mlle. Judic, Littré, Coquelin, Dufaure and Daudet are in all the nooks. No impression, not even the places, is really new. One never sees Paris for the first time, but always sees it again. It does not recall any Italian city, yet does not appear strange, so many reminiscenses of our intellectual life do we find there again. A friend says to you, "Here is Sardou's house; this is Gambetta's palace; here are Dumas' windows; here the office of *Figaro*, and you reply most naturally, "Oh, I knew that." Thus, recognizing thousands of objects and aspects, we continue to move rapidly among the many carriages, through a dense crowd which stops us suddenly, under the delicious shade of Monceau Park, around the great, light arches of the *halles*, before the immense *Magasin de Nouveautés*, hedged in by carriages; half seeing in the distance, now one side of the *Opera*, now a colonnade of the *Bourse*, now the roof of a railway

station, now a palace burned by the commune, now a gilded cupola of the *Invalides*, saying to one another a thousand things, and the same things, with the greatest enthusiasm, yet without uttering one word, or exchanging a glance.

I had heard it said that a stranger in Paris is hardly aware of the fact that there is an Exposition. That is nonsense, for everything leads the thoughts to the Exposition. One sees the towers of the Trocadero in effigy on every side, as if thousands of mirrors reflected them, and the picture of the Champs de Mars is presented to you in innumerable ways, under as many forms. All the population seem to agree, and do agree to make the fête successful. There is a universal refinement of courtesy, every one does his part. Even the smallest shopkeeper feels the dignity of a host. You read in the face of every Parisian the satisfaction of being a stockholder of the theatre in which this great spectacle is being offered to the world, and the consciousness of being an object of admiration, which serves greatly toward making him one. The great city smiles blandly, and is eager to please all. It has provided in fact, in a thousand ways, at every

step and at every price, for every conceivable desire and caprice. There is a fever for this "Industrial Fair." Labor, peace, fraternity and grand fraternal hospitality resound on all sides. Perhaps, in fact it is certain, that there is hidden under this another feeling, that of *amour propre*, wounded in another field, which seizes the present glory, in order to compensate it for the past; and exalts with all its force the supremacy which remains, to throw obscurity upon that, most dear to the heart perhaps, which it has lost. Yet none the less extraordinary is the sight of this city (which one day seemed to have sunk entirely under the maledictions of God), after seven years, so grand, superb and proud, so full of blood, gold and glory, and one experiences an unexpected sensation on arriving here. You started for the Exposition, that was your aim, and the first object in view. You have scarcely arrived before it becomes the last. Paris, which made it, kills it. You think that down yonder, at the end of the great city, is an immense shoddy palace, containing many beautiful things, but you regard it almost with disdain, as if it were some importunate person, who wished to contend with

and disturb your enjoyment of Paris. The first day the picture of the Towers of the Trocadero was odious to me. So at the Champs de Mars, standing in ecstasies before a pretty English girl who is working, you hardly deign to give one glance at the ingenious machine which gleams under her hands.

At last we reach the Seine. What a full, deep breath we draw! How beautiful always is this great blue stream which flows, reflecting the gay colors of its thousand floating houses, between the two high banks crowned with colossi of stone! Before and behind us the long bridges mingle their arches of every form, and the black streaks formed by the crowd which swarms behind its parapets; beneath, the boats filled with people follow each other; crowds of human beings continually descend the terraces of the banks, and quarrel at the steps; and the confused voices of the multitude mingle with the songs of women crowded in the wash houses, with the sound of the horns and bells, the noise of the carriages on the quays, the lament of the river and murmur of the trees on the bank, stirred by a light breeze, which makes one feel the freshness of the country and the sea. The Seine too labors for

the "Great Festival of Peace," and it seems as if it spread out more benevolently than usual (between the two Parises which look at it) its regal and maternal grandeur.

At this point, my companion could no longer resist the temptations of *Notre Dame*, and we climbed to the top of the two towers to see "the monster." A great thing is that for calming the mind. We must at least look down upon this monstrous city—in the only way which is possible—with our eyes. So we climbed on to the point of the roof of the left tower, where Quasimodo stood astride of the bell, and seized the staff—what a glorious immensity! Paris fills the horizon and seems as if it would cover all the world with the gray, immovable, measureless waves of its roofs and walls. The sky was not clear. The clouds threw here and there dark shadows which covered spaces large as Rome; and in other parts appeared like mountains, great galleries and immense promontories gilded by the sun. The Seine glistened like a silver scarf from one end of Paris to the other, striped by its thirty bridges, which seemed like threads stretched between the banks, and scarcely

dotted by the hundred boats, that looked like floating leaves. Beneath, the delicate and sad pile, the Cathedral, the two islands—squares black with ants, the skeleton of the future *Hôtel de Ville*, resembling a great bird cage, and the advertisement, (immeasurable and insolent,) of a clothes merchant, which met the eye at the distance of one thousand two hundred metres. Here and there great spots that were cemeteries, gardens and parks, and resembled green islands in that ocean. Away in the distance, on the horizon, across light violet mists, lay uncertain outlines of smoking suburbs, behind which, nothing being visible, we still fancied Paris. On another side, other enormous suburbs, crowded upon heights like armies ready to descend, full of sadness and menace. In the valley of the Seine, with a clearness, slightly indistinct, as if enveloped in an enormous and luminous cloud of dust, the colossal and transparent architecture of the Champs de Mars. What dizzy flights of the eye from Belleville to Ivry, from the Bois de Boulogne to Pantin, from Courbevoie to the Forest of Vincennes, springing from cupola to cupola, tower to tower, from colossus to colossus, from memory to memory,

and century to century, accompanied as if with music, by the long, deep inhalation of Paris. Poor and dear nest of my little family, where are you? Then my friend said to me—"Come, let us go down into the Inferno!"—and we turned to dive into the obscurity of an interminable winding staircase, when an unexpected stroke of the great bell of Louis XIV made us tremble, like the discharge of a cannon.

So we returned to the Boulevards. It was the dinner hour. At that time the commotion is simply indescribable. Carriages pass six in a row, fifty in a line, in great groups, or thick masses, which scatter here and there in the direction of the side streets, and it seems as if they issued from each other, like rays of light, making a dull, monotonous sound, resembling that of an enormous, unending railway train which is passing by. Then all the gay life of Paris pours itself out there from all the neighboring streets, the galleries and the squares. The hundred omnibuses of the Trocadero arrive and unload, the carriages and the crowd on foot which is coming from the steps of the Seine, masses of people who cross the streets at the risk of their lives, step on to

the sidewalk, assail the chiosks, from which myriads of newspapers are hanging, dispute the seats before the cafés and bubble up at the opening of the streets. The first lamps are being lighted, and the great banquet begins. From every side come the sound and glisten of the glasses and knives and forks on the white table-cloths spread in the sight of all. Delicious odors steal from the grand restaurants, the windows of whose upper story are being lighted, showing fragments of gleaming rooms and the shadows of women gliding backward and forward behind the lace curtains. A warm, soft air, like that of a theatre filled with the perfume of Havana cigars, and the penetrating odor of absinthe, which gives a greenish hue to ten thousand glasses, with the fragrance coming from the flower stalls, with musk, perfumed clothes and feminine coiffures; an odor belonging entirely to the Boulevards of Paris, its boudoirs and hotels, which always affects the head. The carriages stop; the *cocottes*, with their long trains descend from them, and disappear with the rapidity of arrows through the doors of the restaurants. Among the crowd at the cafés resounds the silvery and forced laughter of those

seated in little circles. The "couples" break audaciously through the crowd. The people begin to form themselves into double lines at the doors of the theatres, and circulation is interrupted at every moment. You are obliged to walk zigzag, taking short steps and gently forcing your way with your elbows through the forest of high hats, opera hats, black overcoats, dress suits, open waistcoats and embroidered shirt bosoms, taking care to avoid treading on little feet and trains, in the midst of a low, confused and hurried murmur, upon which is echoed the sound of flying corks, and in a fine cloud of dust arising from that terrible asphalt. It is no longer a mere coming and going of people, but a sort of whirlpool, or surging mass, as if an immense furnace were burning under the street. It is an idleness which seems a labor, a wearisome fête, as if people were fearful that they should be too late to take their places at the great banquet. The vast space is no longer sufficient for the black, nervous, elegant, sensual and perfumed multitude so full of gold and all kinds of appetites, which seeks pleasures for all the senses. From moment to moment the spectacle becomes more exciting. The

rushing of the carriages resembles the disordered flight of a retreating army; the cafés sound like workshops; under the shadow of the trees sweet colloquies are being held, and every thing moves and trembles in that half darkness, not yet conquered by the nocturnal illumination. An indescribable voluptuousness permeates the air, while the night of Paris, laden with follies and sins, prepares its enticing snares. This is the moment in which the great city takes possession of and conquers you, even if you be the most austere man on earth. It is the *Lenocinio Gallico* of Gioberti. It is an invisible hand which caresses you, a sweet voice whispering in your ear, a spark that runs through your veins, and an impetuous desire to dive into that vortex and be drowned, which having passed away, you can go somewhere and dine delightfully for two francs and fifty centimes.

The dinner, too, is a spectacle, for which you find yourself involuntarily (like us) in an immense restaurant, brilliant as a theatre, which consists of one large hall, encircled by a broad gallery, where five hundred persons, making the noise of a good-natured assembly, can be fed at once,—after which comes

the last scene of the marvellous representation commenced at eight o'clock in the morning in the Square of the Bastile, namely—the night of Paris.

Let us return to the heart of the city. Here it seems as if day were beginning again. It is not an illumination, but a fire. The Boulevards are blazing. Half closing the eyes it seems if one saw on the right and left two rows of flaming furnaces. The shops cast floods of brilliant light half across the street, and encircle the crowd in a golden dust. Diffused rays and beams, which make the gilded letters and brilliant trimmings of the façades shine as if of phosphorus, pour down on every side. The chiosks, which extend in two interminable rows, lighted from within, with their many colored panes, resembling enormous Chinese lanterns placed on the ground, or the little transparent theatres of the Marionettes, give to the street the fantastic and childlike aspect of an Oriental fête. The numberless reflections of the glasses, the thousand luminous points shining through the branches of the trees, the inscriptions in gas gleaming on the theatre fronts, the rapid motion of the innumerable carriage lights, that seem like myriads of fireflies set in motion by the wind,

the purple lamps of the omnibuses, the great flaming halls opening into the street, the shops which resemble caves of incandescent gold and silver, the hundred thousand illuminated windows, the trees that seem to be lighted, all these theatrical splendors, half-concealed by the verdure, which now and then allows one to see the distant illuminations, and presents the spectacle in successive scenes,—all this broken light, refracted, variegated, and mobile, falling in showers, gathered in torrents, and scattered in stars and diamonds, produces the first time an impression of which no idea can possibly be given. It seems like an immense display of fireworks, which suddenly being extinguished, will leave the city buried in smoke. There is not a shadow on the sidewalks, where one could find a pin. Every face is illuminated. You discover your own image reflected on every side. You can see everything, the interior of the cafés, even to the last mirrors, glistening with the diamonds of the fair sinners. The fair sex, which during the day seemed to be dispersed and hidden, abounds in the crowd. Before every café there is the parquette of a theatre, of which the Boulevard is the stage. Every face is

turned toward the street, and it is a curious fact that aside from the rumbling of the carriages, no loud noise is to be heard. You look a great deal, but you say little, and that in a low voice, as if out of respect for the place, or because the great light imposes a certain reserve. You walk on, always in the midst of a fire, amid an immovable and seated crowd, so that it seems as if you were passing from saloon to saloon in an immense open palace, or through a suite of enormous Spanish *Patios*, amid the splendors of a ball, among a million guests, without knowing when you will arrive at the exit, if there be one.

So, step by step, you reach the Place de l'Opera.

It is here that Paris makes one of its grandest impressions. You have before you the façade of the *Theatre*, enormous and bold, resplendant with colossal lamps between the elegant columns, before which open Rue Auber and Rue Halévy; to the right, the great furnace of the Boulevard des Italiens; to the left, the flaming Boulevard des Capucines, which stretches out between the two burning walls of the Boulevard Madeleine, and turning around, you see three great diverging streets which

dazzle you like so many luminous abysses : Rue de la Paix, all gleaming with gold and jewels, at the end of which the black *Colonne Vendôme* rises against the starry sky ; the Avenue de l'Opera inundated with electric light ; Rue Quatre Septembre shining with its thousand gas jets ; and seven continuous lines of carriages issuing from the two Boulevards and five streets, crossing each other rapidly on the square, and a crowd coming and going under a shower of rosy and whitest light diffused from the great ground-glass globes, which produce the effect of wreaths and garlands of full moons, coloring the trees, high buildings and the multitude with the weird and mysterious reflections of the final scene of a fancy ballet. Here one experiences for the moment the sensations produced by Hasheesh. That mass of gleaming streets which lead to the *Theatre Français*, to the *Tuileries*, to the Concorde and Champs Elysées, each one of which brings you a voice of the great Paris festival, calling and attracting you on seven sides, like the stately entrances of seven enchanted palaces, and kindling in your brain and veins the madness of pleasure. You would like to see everything and be everywhere at one time, to

hear from the mouth of the great Got the sublime *Efface* of *Les Fourchambaults*, to frolic at the *Mabille*, to swim in the Seine, and to sup at the *Maison Dorée*;—you would like to fly from theatre to theatre, ball to ball, garden to garden, and splendor to splendor, dispensing gold, champagne and *bons mots*—and in fact live ten years in one night.

Yet this is not the greatest spectacle of the night. You go on as far as the *Madeleine*, turn into Rue Royale, emerge on the Place de la Concorde, and there give vent to the loudest and most joyous exclamation of surprise which Paris can draw from the lips of a stranger. There certainly is no other square in any European city where beauty, light, art and nature aid each other so marvellously by forming a spectacle which entrances the imagination. At the first glance you are unable to grasp anything, either the boundaries of the square, the distance, where you are or what you see. It is an immense open-air theatre, in the midst of an enormous flaming garden, which reminds one of the illuminated encampment of an army of three hundred thousand men; but when you have reached the centre of the square, are

standing at the foot of the obelisk of Sesostris, between the two monumental fountains, and see, on the right, between two great Gabriel columned buildings, the superb Rue Royale, shut in at the end by the magnificent façade of the *Madeline;* on the left, the Pont de la Concorde, opening opposite the palace of the Corps Législatif, whitened by a flood of electric light; on the other side, the great dark spot, the Imperial gardens, enwreathed in light, at the end of which are the ruins of the *Tuileries*, and in the opposite direction, the majestic avenue of the Champs Elysées, terminated by the high *Arc de l'Etoile,* dotted with fire from the lanterns of ten thousand carriages and cabs, and lined with two groves scattered with gleaming cafés and theatres; where you embrace with one glance the illuminated banks of the Seine, the gardens, monuments, and the immense and scattered crowd coming from the bridges, boulevards, groves, quays, theatres, and swarming confusedly from every side of the square; in that strange light, among the jets and cascades of silvery water, amid the statues, gigantic candelabra, pillars and verdure, in the limpid and fragrant air of a beautiful summer night, then you feel all the

beauty of that spot, unrivalled in all the world, and you cannot refrain from crying, Oh, Paris! Cursed and dear Paris! Bold syren, is it indeed true that one must flee thee like a fury, or adore thee like a Goddess? From thence we went as far as the garden of the Champs Elysées, to wander among the open-air theatres, chiosks, alcazars, circuses and concert halls, through interminable and crowded avenues, from which we could hear the noisy sounds of the orchestras, applause and laughter of those immense tippling parquettes, and the falsetto voices of the canzonette singers, whose luxurious nudity and gypsy dresses we could see through the foliage, in the midst of the splendor of those stages framed by plants. We wished to go to the very end, but the farther we advanced, the more that nocturnal bacchanal lengthened out and enlarged; from behind every group of trees sprang a new theatre and luminary, at every turn of the avenue we found ourselves in face of a new revelry; then too, on the other hand, my good friend Giacosa had been begging for mercy for some time, in a most lamentable tone of voice, telling me that his eyes were fast closing, and he could no longer keep his head from

drooping on his shoulders. So we returned to the Place de la Concorde, stopped a moment to contemplate that marvellous Rue de Rivoli, lighted for the length of ten miles like a ball room, and entered at midnight the Boulevards, still resplendent, crowded, noisy and gay as at the beginning of the evening, just as if the busy day of Paris were commencing then; as if the great city had banished sleep forever, and were condemned by God to the torture of an everlasting festival. From thence we transported our remains to the hotel.

This is the way we passed our first day at Paris.

II.

A GLANCE AT THE EXPOSITION.

The first time I entered the enclosure of the Exposition on the Trocadero side, I stopped for some moments at the Pont de Jena, in order to seek a simile, which would best render to my future readers a faithful idea of the spectacle, and it occurred to me to compare the sensation one experiences in entering, to that which one would have in arriving at a great square, in which the orchestras of the *Nouvel-Opéra* and *Opéra-Comique* are playing on one side, the bands of ten regiments on the other, and all the musical instruments of the earth (from the new piano-forte with a double keyboard, to the horn and drum of the savages, accompanied in a falsetto by the thousand soprani of the Café Chantant, the noise of a hail storm of petards and the booming of cannon) in the middle. This

is not an anthological simile, but it gives an idea of the thing.

In fact, upon reaching the Pont de Jena, you feel obliged to close your eyes for some minutes, as upon arriving in that square you would have to stop your ears.

You are astonished, provoked, confused and excited at the same time, undecided betwixt applause and a shrug of the shoulders, between admiration and disappointment; in one of those uncertain states, in which generally, after meditating for some time, you light a cigar.

Picture to yourself, on one side, upon an eminence, that enormous architectural braggart, the palace of the Trocadero, with a cupola higher than that of St. Peters, flanked by two towers which look like *campanili*, minarets and light-houses; that horrid centre building and those two large, graceful wings, with their hundred Greek pillars, Moorish pavilions and Byzantine arches; painted and decorated like an Indian palace, from which falls a torrent of water in the midst of a group of gilded statuettes—the arch of an immense amphitheatre that crowns the horizon, and crushes all the sur-

rounding heights. On the opposite side, at a great distance, imagine that other enormous edifice of glass and iron, painted, gilded, beflagged, decorated with coats of arms, and gleaming, with its three great transparent pavilions, its colossal statues, and its sixty doors, as majestic in appearance as a temple, and light as the immense tent of a roving people. Between these two theatrical edifices, fancy once more that great river and bridge; and on the right and left an indescribable labyrinth of gardens, rocks, lakes, ascents, descents, grottos, aquariums, fountains, steps and avenues lined with statues. A minature world; a plain and a height upon which every nation of the earth has deposited its plaything; an international caravansary peopled by African and Asiatic shops and cafés, villas and workshops, in the midst of which a little barbarous city raises its white minarets and green cupolas; the Chinese roofs, Siamese chiosks, the Persian terraces, the bazaars of Egypt and Morocco; and innumerable buildings of stone, marble, wood, glass and iron of all countries, forms and colors, rise one beside the other, looking like the model of a cosmopolitan city, built for an experiment, inside a great botani-

cal garden, in order to be reconstructed later on a grander scale. Picture to yourself this spectacle and the strange population of vendors and custodians that animates it. All those ambiguous faces of a swarthy hue, Parisianized Arabs, that re-dyed Orient, phantomlike Africa, Asia in minature, all that cleansed and varnished barbarity placed in the show window with a little red ribbon around its neck; and that inexhaustible black crowd of curious people, who wander slowly around with a heavy gait and languid eyes, looking on every side, without knowing where to stop. Well? What is to be said about it? There is nothing lacking but the little theatre of Guignol. It is a great Bröck, much more beautiful without any doubt, and more varied than that of Holland. It is so good that one is tempted to ask whether it is for sale before 1879 scatters everything far and wide with a great explosion. A spectacle unique in all the world, really beautiful, immense and hideous, which is fascinating.

One's first distinct sense of admiration is felt on going into the vestibule of the palace of the Champs de Mars. It seems like entering the enormous nave

of a cathedral gleaming with gold and inundated with light. It is a third longer than the largest nave of St. Peter's, and the Arc de l'Etoile could take shelter under the roof of its pavilions without coming in contact with them. Here you begin to hear the deep hum of the crowd within, which resembles that of a city on a fête day. The people gather around the equestrian statue of Charles the Great, before the classic temple of Sévres China, at the foot of the high trophy of Canada, which rises at the end of the vestibule like an ancient tower of assault, and a double procession ascends and descends the steps of that queer Indian palace, upheld by a hundred little pillars and crowned by ten cupolas, into which one must enter in order to ascertain that it is not the nest of little Hindostan princesses to be carried off. A group of curious people stand fascinated around the case of the royal diamonds of England, among which their gleams on a diadem the famous *Kandevassy*, valued at three million francs, dazzling and perfidious like the fixed and fascinating eye of a syren, which at the same moment pricks you to the heart and ruins your soul; but everything is obscured by the fabulous

treasures of India, by that suit of armor, the goblets, vases, saddles, carpets and *narghilés* gleaming with silver, gold and gems; and makes one think of the riches of one of those insensate queens of Arabian legends, so full of caprices and so inexorable, which weary the omnipotent banquets of the Genii. Really, when you think that they are all the spontaneous gifts of princes and people, you believe it without doubt; but you look around involuntarily, with the vague idea that you will find at the foot of the equestrian statue of the Prince of Wales all the donors stripped and bound, and you think too, sometimes, whether in all that space in the vestibule between the Indian palace and the statue of the prince, piling them well from the floor to the ceiling, and not leaving the smallest space, half the skeletons of those dead from hunger in the Indies during the famine, would find place.

After giving a glance at the Vestibule, I hastened with intense curiosity to the inner door which opens on the Street of the Nations.

Yes, it is rather theatrical, but it is beautiful; a lovely trick arranged ingeniously by twenty nations; half a world seen in miniature; the street of a great

metropolis which is to come in a time of universal fraternity, when countries shall have disappeared. At the first glance, it only resembles a superb and fantastic medley, and you think that the world has had a quarter of an hour of good humor. All that line so madly broken by pointed roofs, gothic towers, chiosks, bell towers, spires and pyramids, that row of brightly colored façades, glistening with mosaics and gilding, ornamented with coat of arms, decorated with statues, and crowned with banners; which open in colonades and porticos, and rise in terraces with balustrades, in enclosed balconies, aereal *loggie*, external stair cases and steps; between beds of flowers and jets of fountains; that row of little villas, palaces and cloisters, whose nationality or style one cannot recognize at once, only produce at first a confused sense of pleasure, like the gay sound of a fête, but after the first walk, when you begin to recognize the different buildings, the significance of the spectacle changes. Then from every one of those façades springs an idea, the expression of a feeling different from life, like a whiff of air from another Heaven, another century, which whispers the names of emperors and poets, and brings the

sound of distant music, full of thoughts and memories. All these strange buildings so silent and so lifeless make a curious impression upon you. It seems as if something were being prepared for you in there, and as if at the stroke of midday—(just as out of so many clocks—) English chatelains, Flemish burgomasters, alcaydes of Portugal and priests of the white elephant, mandarins and sultans, Athenians of the time of Pericles, ladies of the fourteenth century, ought to appear at all the doors and windows; run along the balconies, and, having made their automatic bows, re-enter the houses at the last stroke of the bell. The street stretches out to a great length—standing half-way down you can hardly see at the end, the red and white façades of the Netherlands, and the rich claustral door of Portugal, beside which are grouped the curious and variegated architectures of the small African and Asiatic States, quite overwhelmed by the superb and lofty buildings of South America. Nearer this way towers the Palace of Belgium, severe and magnificent in style, with its beautiful columns of dark marbles, whose capitals are gilded; and between the aristocratic Belgium and thoughtful Denmark, rises

timidly, like a prisoner, little white and lovely Greece. Some of the façades seem to have a political significance—Switzerland throws brusquely forward, with a kind of democratic insolence, its enormous bernese roof beside the yellow edifice of Holy Russia, which affects the menacing pride of an imperial castle. Between the long Austrian portico and the black and fantastic façade of China, rises the gilded and arabesqued Spain of the Caliphs. The theatrical arcades of Italy, brought out in bold relief by purple curtains, make a curious impression upon one after the two simple and almost melancholy houses of Scandinavia. From behind the Italian building springs out unexpectedly the rustic façade of Japan, with its great geographical maps so full of scholarly pretentions. Finally, nearest the entrance, the disdainful United States appear, apparently not wishing to take part in the strife, and contenting themselves by proudly displaying their fifty republican coats-of-arms upon a little white house, beside which rise the five graceful edifices belonging to England. A crowd of strangers who come and go, their faces all turned in the same direction; looking with curiosity for the architectural

representative of their respective countries, and recognizing it with a smile, give to this strange street a charming aspect of gayety, and an air of peace and courtesy, which really imbues one with the desire to shake hands all around, and found a weekly journal announcing the disarming of Europe.

The first thing I did was to enter the immense palace containing the "foreign sections," and I found myself in the midst of the magnificent disorder of the English exhibits. Here the first idea passing through one's head is to turn on one's heel and return home. The first day you pass among the English marvels with the indifference of Cretans. You wander for awhile among the purest glass, china and gold ware, furniture and objects of art, borrowed from the inspirations of all times and peoples; fruits of the ingenuity and patience, which unite beauty and utility, and represent the severe luxury of an aristocracy both rich and faithful to its own traditions, that is the observation of a people scattered all over the earth. Here you feel the air of the great workshops of Manchester, there you live for a moment in a castle on the Thames, beyond is felt the familiar and quiet poetry of the

modest *Home*, which is awaiting fortune from ships far away at sea. You pass among the marine vegetation of the Cape of Good Hope, the canguri and eucalyptus of Victoria and New Wales, the minerals of Queensland, the strange jewels of southern Australia, the interminable exhibits of the flora, fauna, industry and costumes of all the colonies belonging to that immense kingdom, and you have not reached the end before you have wandered in thought a hundred times around the globe, and are satiated. Every change of "section" has the effect of something refreshing on the forehead. A hundred paces beyond is another world, and you find yourself suddenly before a most novel spectacle. It is the opening and shutting of surgical beds, a widening and narrowing of chairs (which seem alive) for operations on the eye, a turning of anatomical tables, an opening of sets of artificial teeth, a rising of menacing and ferocious looking instruments, and a grinding and gleaming which makes one shiver. It is not necessary to ask what portion of the world you are in. The solid goldsmith's wares, the enormous vases of silver, the watches of the Californian mines, the trophies, battle-axes of Boston, the electrical

connections, the paper money and the show-windows bristling with iron and formidable projectiles, a certain powerful and rude pride in the display of useful things, announce the exposition of the United States, saddened or gladdened, I know not which, by the noisy music of organs, harmoniums and pianos, which admirably assist the wanderings of the imagination among the thousand objects recalling the hard toils and labor of those colonies in the solitudes of the New World. A fresh spectacle, however, instantly cancels this violent impression. The richness of the carvings of the wood-work around the show windows announces the country of the great forests, and a thousand things recall the sweet melancholy of the beautiful lakes crowned by mountains, bristling with pines and white with snow. Among the products of the mines of Falun and the blocks of nickel, rise the trophies of furs, surrounded by the heads of bears, otters and beavers; the colossal stoves, black pyramids of spherical shaped bottles, skates, cordage and the great masses of Swedish matches, succeeded by the ceramics, in which shine the pale reflections of the northern seas, and the thousand objects

carved by the Norwegian peasants in the interminable twilights of winter nights; images and colors, presenting all together a great melancholy picture, into which the silvery whiteness of the filagree of Christiana scarcely throws a smile like a bright spot in a cloudy sky. This spot suddenly enlarges however, at the exit of the Scandinavian department, and the northern mist is succeeded, in the twinkling of an eye, by the vast, cloudless quiet of a spring-time sky. A collection of pure, white statues, a diffused glistening of crystal, a gleam of silk and mosaics, a brilliancy of color and form, before which all faces brighten, all hearts open, and all mouths exclaim, Italy! before the eyes have had time to read the announcement over the entrance. It is really a great scenic effect, which is followed by another not less marvellous. You pass the sill of a door; have made a two months sea voyage, and are in another hemisphere. You find yourself in the presence of a new artistic ideal (which confuses and jostles violently all the pictures crowded in your head up to that point), and among foreign faces, strange objects, unexpected combinations of color, curious productions of enigmatical industries, which

emit unknown perfumes, and excite little by little, beside mere curiosity, an admiration increased by some indescribable sympathy, like that of nature. It is Japan, the France of Asia, which displays its colossal vases painted on gold ground, salons furnished with porcelain furniture, pictures of birds and flowers embroidered on silk, inlaid work in ivory, bronze and lace, and a thousand little nameless marvels. In every thing there is that crystaline neatness, extraordinary perfection of detail, that aristocratic refinement of color, that lovely ingenuity of the feminine imagination, which is the peculiar and never-to-be-forgotten imprint of its art. Japan prepares you for China, but nevertheless it is a great leap. Tumult follows the harmony of colors, the grotesque, the beautiful, the distorted, the finished, confusion, variety and madness, caprice. Upon one's first entrance the eye is offended, for in the midst of furniture of a thousand unknown forms made of rosewood and ironwood, inlaid with ivory and mother of pearl, and chased with a prodigious amount of patience, rise purple baldachins, screens painted with mysterious gardens, fire-screens embroidered with silvered butterflies and gilded birds,

pagodas of seven storys covered with monsters and weird figures, slender chiosks with overturned and fringed roofs, from the ceilings of which hang enormous fantastic lanterns, resembling aerial temples of gold and coral, between walls covered with great standards of yellow silk ornamented with cabalistic characters in black velvet. Turning your eyes from these things, you discover the sedan chairs for ladies, the mandarin's boots, the curved shoes, opium pipes, chopsticks, curious musical instruments, and images of Chinese life of every period and every grade of society, which satisfy a great deal of curiosity, awakening meanwhile a vast deal more, and greatly confusing the brain. Oh! How thoroughly the tired mind and eye are rested in coming out of the red door of Pekin! It seems as if you were returning to your native country, among brothers and friends. Seville sings, Barcellona works and Granada smiles. At the first glance I recognized my beautiful friends of the time when I was twenty-five. Here are Figaro, the poignards of Toledo, the enticing mantillas, the magnetic shoes, the speaking fans, the picturesque stuffs of Catelonia and Andalusia, Moorish vases, embroideries on silk of antique cloisters, and the

energetic foot-soldiers of Espartero and Prim, who raise their small and pretty chapels *à la* Ros in the midst of the cannon which will destroy the third army of Don Carlos; but it is only a fugitive vision. The Alps and Pyrenees pass, as does a diffused glitter of crystal, which reflects all the metals and pearls, among which gleams on every side the "Widerkomme," crowned and in a coat of arms, announcing Bohemia. You go on through the superb exposition of Vienna watches and rich furniture borrowed from the latest taste and that of the fifteenth century, happily combined; amid piles of soap from the Danube, in the shape of cheeses and fruit, among woven glass and the products of the Hungarian mines, which last show their precious novelty, the black opal; and then——how do you get out again? Are we in the extreme north or in the extreme east? You could imagine one or the other, for they are two spectacles in one. Here, the precious stones of Siberia, the great blocks of malachite from the Ural, the white bears and blue foxes, enormous stoves, the reddish stuffs of Moscow, a thousand painted scenes of the private and grave Russian life, with ingenious examples of new methods

of teaching, which reveal a flourishing culture; there, the splendid, brigand-like costumes of the Caucasus, the barbaric daggers and jewels, and a glimpse of the sky of Tartary with a reflection of the sun of Persia. Then the goldsmiths' ware and ceramics of the byzantine stamp, among which shine the great mosaic dishes with gold grounds, a new glory of Moscow. A varied and confusing exhibition, in fine, which carries the thought in leaps from object to object, from the banks of the Vistula to the walls of China, and leaves one almost dazed in the presence of this immeasurable and deformed empire. Suddenly a breath of mountain air brings you a vague perfume of Italy, and you find yourself in the midst of a thousand things and colors familiar to your eye. It is all of Switzerland, fresh, green, snowy, vigorous, rich and content. Geneva has sent her watches, Neuchâtel her jewels, Choume its majolica, Glaris her stuffs, Zurich her silks, Interlachen her sculpture, Vevay her cigars, and San Gallo and Appenzel have filled an immense hall with their unrivalled embroideries, before which gathers an astonished crowd. From here, however, you already get a glimpse, in the neighboring sections,

of the art and grandeur of a finer and more opulent people. Here are the decorations of princely apartments, pulpits and choir chairs, wonderfully carved, which are reflected in the inlaid floors and colossal mirrors, amid bronzes and piano-fortes, and a superb ceramic which reproduces the great masterpieces of national painting. The laces from Malines, with their aërial and aristocratic grace, fill a room crowded with ladies whose eyes are sparkling. From the walls hang the renowned tapestries of Ingelmunster, the beautiful arms of Lièges, near the carvings in wood from Spa and the metallic products of the Vecchia Montagna, after which you can take breath in a cabinet of King Leopold, carved in oak, which makes you desire sincerely for one small hour each day the crown of Belgium. Then comes a curious contrast, namely, the expositions of two countries totally different, which seem to be looking at each other and quite astonished at finding themselves face to face. Picture to yourself on one side the skins of white bears killed by Danish navigators amid polar ice, on the other, carpets made by the hands of beautiful brown maidens in the bright villages of the Peloponnesus; here, woods from the

forest of Dodona, there, the sandals of the coarse peasants of Flogny; to the right, the marbles from the caves of the Laurium, recalling the glories of the ancient chisel; to the left, the fishing nets of the Baltic, which make the distant echoes of religious and melancholy songs resound in the imagination; and opposite these, pictures of objects found in the excavation of famous ground, and in front the poetry of immortal ruins and ashes glorified by the world, the quiet faces, simple costumes and patriarchal fêtes of a grave and patient people, industrious and economical, who inspire and breathe the love of quiet work and of an obscure and tranquil life. Beyond Denmark opens a new and measureless horizon, before which the visitor stops, and in whose mind are pictured endless *pampas*, tempests of sand, clouds of grasshoppers, innumerable droves of cattle, deserted avenues lined by titanic monuments of stone, unending forests and immense solitary valleys, in which scarcely rises the dawn of human life, and here and there behind a veil of mist, the hideous and stupefied faces of the Incas, listening for the victorious blasts of the trumpet of civilization as it advances. Here is a

labyrinth of walls and galleries, which lead from Peru to Uraguay, from Uraguay to Venezuela, Nicaragua, Mexico, San Salvador, Hayti and Bolivia; between the furniture of Buenos Ayres and the costumes of the ladies of Lima, the hats made from the leaves of the senna, the stuffs of alpaca and carpets of wool, among sugar-cane, bamboo, the scales of the crocodile, deformed idols and the souvenirs of the first conquerors; until this grand and wild picture, which fills you with solemn thoughts, is suddenly disturbed by the thousand smiling colors and infantile trifles of a Mussulman bazaar, from which, through two heavy curtains, one catches a glimpse of the mysterious walls of a harem. Here you are at Tunis. Now, for some time at least, you will not leave the countries "most loved by the sun." Here are the graceful Moorish decorations of the empire of the Scherifs, beside which Persia displays her regal carpets and richly damasked arms. Then comes a little group of semi-fabulous countries, and a confusion of indescribable things which I seem to have seen in dream. Annam with his grotesque furniture and incredible fans; Bankok with his curious musical instruments, and

the hideous masks of his dramatic actors; and Cambodge (good for him who remembers Cambodge). After the story comes the joke, the cupid states, the dwarfs of the fair, who rise one on the shoulder of the other, in the Rue des Nations, in order to appear of some height; Monaco which offers a table, Luxembourg which exhibits school benches, Andorra which presents its laws, and St. Marino which displays a small machine. Here the exhibition assumes rather an ordinary appearance, but it immediately becomes rich and severe again, with the arcades of the chiosks of Belem, and the walls of the Abbey of Bathala, among the models of the ancient Portugese architecture which survived the famous earthquake; in the superb Moorish vases, wood carvings, beautiful mattings of Lisbon, and in the innumerable little painted clay figures, revealing types, fashions and costumes, that make you live for an hour in the city of Camoens in the street *do chiado*, and at the *Passeio don Pedro de Alcantara* among the *fidalgos*, sailors, *toreros*, bemantled cutthroats and the beautiful dark girls of the *Bairro Alto*. Finally the spectacle changes for the last time. You re-enter the mist of the north among a

people well covered and cared for, who tipple, smoke and work with bodies and souls in peace, and here we find once more its dykes and canals, its little rooms full of comforts, its coarse housewives, spread tables, markets and schools, bridges and sleighs. All Holland in fact; damp and gray, in which the world terminates and the wearying vision vanishes.

Coming out from here, it is an excellent plan to escape, if you can, and take a douche bath in the neighboring bath house, and then return to see the "French section." In making up the account, you find that it is a walk of 8,000 steps. There are about two hundred rooms, differing in color and gradations of light, but almost all illuminated by a soft light, in which the eye rests. Now you seem to be in a palace, now in a museum, now in a church and now in an academy. France took (in space) the lion's share, but knew how to make herself worthy of it. One of the most beautiful exhibits is that of the glassware, in an exquisite white room that attracts the attention on all sides. It is a forest of crystal inundated with light, a palace of perforated and chiselled ice, transparent and elegant,

in which gleam the colors of every flower and every shell, brilliant with gold and silver, amid a diffused dazzling of diamantine rays and a confusion of numberless rainbows, which makes one close his eyes. I leave to others the description of the great chandeliers, with their myriads of prisms, the candelabra and engraved vases, bottles and elegant sky-blue, blood-red and snow-white cups, the imitations of Murano, of Baccarat, and the famous enamelled panes of Broccard. I confine myself to the expression of a wild admiration for the miraculous delicacy of the table sets of Clichy—really manufactured for the banquets of youthful queens—as graceful and slender as the creatures of a dream. Oh! I detest that coarse banker who will place all this loveliness before his ordinary friends of the *Bourse* at his dinner on Christmas day!

Almost all the most precious treasures of the Exposition are near this spot. A few steps further on you reach the Jewel department, which is one enormous casket, containing 8,000,000 of francs worth of pearls and diamonds, and full of curious rareties and marvellously delicate workmanship, that is sufficient to make an honest looker-on wish to have his hands

tied. There are rooms filled with goldsmiths' ware, vases and statues fit for royal apartments, golden knives and forks, gleaming altars, and thousands of costly little masterpieces, which would excite the desire for household luxury in the breast of an Arab from the desert. From here you are attracted to another side by a strange kind of music made by a great number of mechanical birds, who whistle, chirp and trill, opening their beaks and moving their heads and tails, to announce the exhibition of clocks and watches, in which are gathered the most beautiful works of the 40,000 workmen of Besançon, from the microscopic watches which one could send in an envelope to his sweetheart, to the large clocks which sound the hour of sweet appointments with the stroke of a cathedral bell. Almost all the departments are announced beforehand by some particular thing. Arriving at a certain point, you hear the diabolical noise of organs, clarions, violincelli and trumpets, resembling the orchestra of madmen, and this is the exhibit of musical instruments. Having passed through the upholstery rooms, decorated in black, you suddenly feel a whiff of heated air blowing in your face, the decorations become flame

color, and you find yourself in the midst of furnaces, ovens, fire-places, gas kitchens, photo-electric lamps, heaters and stoves, which stretch out in all directions their gigantic arms, and give to the hall the gloomy aspect of a workshop. Here, however, your head begins to be effected by a mixture of delicate but subtle perfumes, which excite your imagination, and one step further finds you at the exposition of perfumery, gleaming with a thousand colors, so that closing your eyes you dream in a moment of all the mortal sins of Paris. These contrasts are most frequent. Wander, for example, in the so-called department of "Articles de Paris," filled with coffers, combs, baskets, caskets, and the infinite number of precious and lovely nick-nacks, which express all the refined tastes of elegant life, and you feel vitiated by the thousand desires of the dandy and womankind. Here suddenly springs up an ugly squall of oceanic winds, and a chorus of gloomy and rough voices that causes a shock to your nerves. You have entered the immense hall, decorated in the manner of savages, with enormous ropes and cords, the products of the French colonies, lances, arrows, strange birds and hideous fetiches, bamboos

from Martinique and the elephant feet of Cochin-China, the vegetals of Senegal, the work of those transported to Caledonia, and among thousands of things, in fact, that relate to you stories of labor, pain and perils, and which you leave in a quiet, meditative frame of mind. From here you return to civilization, among the marvels of ceramics, and enter a room presenting the appearance of a picture-gallery, in which you see the impecunious lovers of this art, with their eyes fairly starting out of their sockets. Here one finds the variety and riches of a flourishing industry, full of hope and boldness, smiled upon by fortune. Imitations from the antique, rejuvenated traditions, new victories of the art, such as the enamel on gold ground and the wonderfully-obtained carmine, busts, statues, landscapes, figures, flowers and portraits of a fresh and powerful coloring, which makes them appear like oil-paintings, and every sort of colossal decorations, promising to the new ceramic a splendid future of conquest (already begun at the Exhibition) over architecture. Then come regions through which you run; forests of unsheathed and bristling blades and rows of rooms in which there are only threads and woven

goods, where, thanks to the solitude, you can assume the gait of an exhausted vagrant. Suddenly you stop before the splendor of the silk department, where you find silks of all colors and designs, antique and new, among which gleam those gold and silver embroideries that take the road to the East in order to be cut up into caftans and trowsers for the beauties of the harem. Here, for the ladies, commences the kingdom of temptation. The most reserved of them cannot control her feelings. It really is very entertaining to see the longing glances and hear the long and irresistible exclamations of astonishment resounding before those show cases.

We enter the lace-room, wherein is displayed the work of the hands of five hundred thousand women, consisting of veils, imperial flounces and trimming, which you could blow into the air with one puff, pictures full of airy figures, parasols and fans made of spiders' webs, fairy-like embroideries and real needle paintings, beautiful enough to make one demand on his knees (like a king in the *Thousand and One Nights*), and at the risk of being bound to a gridiron, the hand of the beautiful unknown embroiderer. Then you enter an Andalusian garden,

at the beginning of May; going from thence among the clothing of the two sexes, together with that of the hunter and Amazon, and toilets for the ball, bath, wedding and death, comedian or cupid, all marvels of elegance and taste, before which one sees the provincial dressmakers, standing in attitudes of profoundest discouragement. Here is a mysterious alcove, all white, blue and red, and dimly lighted, which you open your arms to embrace, so lovely and provoking are those little corsets for girls, nervous women of thirty, etc., which reveal the most precious secrets of female beauty of every age and form. From here return among the fans painted by famous artists, that refresh the face and mind with delicious landscapes from the Alps and Rhine; then go into a shoe-bazaar, resembling that of Stamboul, where you can pass an hour pleasantly in shoeing the imaginary little feet of Circassian princesses and Spanish marchionesses; then among the gilded shawls of the Campagna des Indes; from hence into the room devoted to the objects for travelling and camping, which makes the blood of vagabonds boil in their veins; then to the exhibit of playthings, where everything is moving, jumping, singing, tinkling,

making a noise generally, and fascinating enough to reduce all the children in the world to a state of desperation. It is the profusion of things, however, that frightens one. You walk among the suspenders, of which there are enough to bind up all the pensioners of Italy; among the garters, sufficient in number to provide all the lovers of Frisia with their wedding presents. Thus we go on throngh the long gallery of the liberal arts, decorated with severe simplicity, from the Hall of the Missions down among the libraries and maps, and among surgical instruments and anatomical models, where a few silent visitors stop to meditate and take notes. Here is the superb book-exhibition of France, first among all, where the publishers display on the wall (like titles of nobility) the interminable catalogue of illustrious authors' writings they have given to the world—a collection of jewels from Plon, Didot, Jouvet and Hachette, which announces to the public the long-desired and glorious union of the genius of Ariosto and the inspirations of Doré, the delicate and magnificent bindings of Rossigneux, before which the hand seizes the pocketbook, and then is raised to give a resigned tug to the beard. And so on

through the brilliant exhibition of arms in the halls of the sculpture of metals, a vast museum of immense bronze clocks, life-sized silver statues, candelabra, lamps and lanterns for the vestibules of palaces. These are followed by a double row of saloons, open like theatres, containing the marvellous display of furniture, in which alternate the graceful styles of the fashion and the correctly elegant shapes of the *renaissance*, the gallery of products being the last one remaining. You have, however, a half hour's walk among the cyclopic works of metallic industries, the thousands of enormous pipes, which present the aspect of walls of a grotto of bassalts, through forests of iron and copper, between the innumerable works of galvanized metal, among which towers the colossal vase of Doré; and so on, passing the Christophle Museum of statuary, a mountain of furs, a forest of feathers, a palace of coral, chemical products, skins and what not. Toward the end, the same weariness puts wings to your feet, the halls fly by, the different objects grow confused, and if there were a railway you would take the train, and when you had reached the end you would give your head for a

crown, with the firm belief that you were making an excellent bargain.

Let us take a little nap upon one of the thousand divans in the Champs de Mars, and then return into this great sea. I am only expressing my impressions during the first day. Well, the thing which causes me the greatest astonishment is not the objects exhibited, but the art of exhibiting them. Here we must admire the inexhaustible fecundity of the human imagination. The exposition of the means of exposition would be in itself sufficient to call forth amazement. Picture to yourself great chiosks of carved wood, so light that they look like paper or straw, engraved showcases for the display of Scotch threads, which cost a thousand pounds a piece, glass houses, triumphal arches, species of colossal triumphs for the table, laden with objects which could stand in the middle of a square. The thread is arranged in the form of tabernacles and churches ; the pins, by the million, in trophies; the alum of potash in walls, the carpets in pyramids which touch the ceiling, the glycerine is modelled into busts of celebrated men, the soap melted into monumental columns of a marble-like appearance, iron pipes joined in the shape of

titanic organs or little churches in the Greek style, the kettles into Egyptian obelisks, copper cylinders into Babylonian columns, and the telegraph wires into bell-towers. There is a display of architectural oddities carried to such a point as to be laughable. One merchant builds a castle of mattresses. The neighboring watchmaker raises a pyramid of two thousand watch-cases. A Dutchman displays a temple of stearine, which could contain twenty people, with its statues and steps. A Frenchman constructs a temple of crystal, upheld by six columns and surrounded by a balustrade. An English perfumer consecrates a palace to his cosmetics and bottles. A Parisian nail manufacturer represents, with nothing more or less than his gilt-headed nails, the palace of the Trocadero, with its cupola, galleries and cascade. A liquor-dealer from Amsterdam makes a cathedral altar with his bottles. A perfumer from Rotterdam has a fountain of cologne—this to attract attention and money. Then add an infinite number of gold medals and documents of every sort exposed by salesmen, many of whom display even the photographs and complimentary letters of their purchasers; others assist themselves with mechanical

contrivances. The opera hats open and shut by themselves; small wax hands seal letters; the automatons call you, the musical boxes amuse you, and the exhibitors apostrophize you and give all necessary explanations.

Then there are the giants who perform almost the same office, for in every exposition there is a great deal of this kind of childishness. Here is an enormous bottle of champagne, large enough to intoxicate a battalion of sharpshooters; there a huge corkscrew, that seems made to drag up roots. In the French exhibition of wrought steel, an immense damasked knife, in comparison with which the largest *Navajas* of Spain look like penknives. There is a French cask containing five hundred litres, a Hungarian one holding one thousand, and that of the champagne factory in which are placed twenty-five thousand bottles. There are mirrors measuring twenty-seven square metres, rails in a single piece of fifty metres, and metallic wires twenty-five kilometres long. Add to this the immense hammer of Creusot, weighing eighty thousand kilograms, and the gigantic roaster of Maison Baudon, which roasts twenty kids at a time. Then the marvels of human

patience — microscopic knives, with their beautiful sheaths, one hundred and four of which can go into the stone of a cherry; the Oriental carpets made of six thousand fragments; the Spanish bureau composed of three million pieces of wood; the stuffs costing five hundred francs the metre, only five centimetres of which can be woven a day; the set of china from the United States, upon which two hundred workmen labored for eighteen months, and the chiselled fountain costing a Scotch peasant seven years work. In fine, the oddities and the whims of human ingenuity, like the needle of Emile Praga. This man could have put all these questions, in a certain kind of poetry, to his sweetheart: Do you wish a clock that will give wind? A watch made with a sunflower, out of which comes a spider to catch a fly? A piece of furniture that is transformed into a billiard table, a writing desk, a chessboard or dining table at your pleasure? A real boat with rudder and oars, which can be carried under your arm to Lake Como? A pocketbook that discharges shots? The map of Europe in a handkerchief? A pair of shoes made from the scales of a fish? A bed of sealing-wax? An armchair of

glass, a violin of majolica and a steam velocipede? Everything is here—the magical watches, the marvellous pike tops, dolls which talk French, and the Spaniards made of wood who teach you how to manage a fan. Really, nothing is lacking but Emile Praga's needle.

Then the beautiful things! They are infinite in number, but rather expensive. In fact you cannot furnish a house (in imagination) according to your own taste, without spending a million in a quarter of an hour. At every step you find a piece of furniture which takes your fancy, and you are almost tempted to do a foolish thing, when, in going up to the card containing the price, you see behind a *one*, that gives you a ray of hope, four confounded zeros, which resemble four open mouths that laugh in your face. It is a continual torment of Tantalus. There is only one single comfort to be found, and that is that many of these things have already been purchased. You have fastened your eyes upon a wonderful set from the *Maison Christophle*, valued at four thousand francs, but the Duke of Santoña has cheated you out of it. So the duchess has freed you from the temptation of carrying home a superb

dress of Colbert & Alençon, which would have cost you all your patrimony. Prince Demidorf has carried off the great malachite vase, adorned with gold, and three metres high, that stands in the Russian section. The most beautiful pair of shoes, trimmed with lace, in the whole exhibition, belong to the Princess Metternich; the two handsomest muffs of black fox are the property of the Princess of Wales, and the Emperor of Austria has already put his august seal upon an incomparable casket of engraved silver which would have been your delight. However, something is left us. I would suggest to the ladies who are easily pleased, to content themselves with an exquisite lace veil in the Belgian exhibition, made with a thread that costs five thousand crowns the kilogram; and to the judicious married people a Chinese bed of rose wood, inlaid with ivory, costing more than a passable villa on the banks of Lake Como. At the door of this room they might hang two silk curtains embroidered in silver and gold, which are for sale in the Austrian Department for one thousand two hundred Napoleons. There is the convenience of being able to purchase entire rooms, in fact apartments, of every style and every country,

right there on the spot, with a great saving of time and annoyance, and there are also some charming things within range of a modest purse. Rouvenat's sapphire, surrounded with diamonds, which can be had at one million and a half: and by haggling a little, you can obtain at a reasonable price a curious diamond cut in the form of a gas lantern, and set in a microscopic candelabrum of gold, which is *really* very beautiful. All these things make your head whirl at first, but you shrug your shoulders and walk on without paying any attention to them, saying: "Trifles! trifles!" with the indifference of a frank impostor.

Then we go to see the exposition of alimentary products, rather less dangerous to the fancy; a walk of a little less than a mile. Shut your eyes, take your head in your hands, and try to imagine how much that is strange and rare a man can put into his body without risking his life—for there is every thing here. You can drink, for fifteen centimes, a glass of the fourteen springs of mineral water in France, or a glass of the water of the Thermopoli in the Greek section, and a glass of beer from Denmark that has made the tour of the world. Or, if

you prefer wine, champagne, made under your eyes, all the wines of Spain in pretty bottles for half a franc, sold by a beautiful girl from Xerez; the wines of Portugal and Madeira, bottled in 1792, at one hundred francs a bottle, including the historical documents "duly legalized." Then if wine eighty-six years old seems too young for you, you can have in the French section, in the midst of a group of nonagenarian sisters, a bottle of wine of Jura of 1774, crowned with houseleek, at a suitable price. You find the chiosks of Scicilian and Jura wines, all the wines of Australia in the miner's hut erected by the government of Melbourne, and in the section of the English colonies the mysterious wine of Constantia of the Cape of Good Hope and the enigmatical wine of the Hermitage of New Wales, made from raisins. You have here the wine of Schiraz in the Persian Department, the wine of Corinth beside the water of the Thermopoli, and you may taste an exquisite Tokay in the rustic café of Hungary to the music of a gypsy band. As far as eating is concerned, you have only to ask for it. In the pavilions of the French colonies a creole gives you pine-apple, a mulatto bananas, a negro vanilla. You can

eat the marmalade from Canada, and soak in a glass of the famous St. Hubert of Victoria, biscuits which have crossed the Atlantic. You can choose between the celebrated fish of Norway and the renowned pork of Chicago, or you can do better still. Take a piece of raw meat which has come from Uraguay, and go and have it cooked yourself with the burning mirror of the University of Tours in the gallery of the liberal arts of France. Then there are the Dutch, American, English and Spanish restaurants. You have at your service a hundred pretty girls dressed in black and white in a monumental *Bouillon Duval*, which looks like an Indian temple. If you have a weakness for Russia, you can go to the restaurant of that country, where little Polish, Muscovite, Armenian and Caucasian hands bring you the real Kumysy from the steppes of the Ural, the healing waters of the Neva, the *colebiaka* of herbs and fish, or some other Russo-Turkish medley seasoned with the wine of cyprus. For sweets, France offers you the palace of Fontainebleau; gothic cathedrals of sugar, and appetizing bunches of rose and violets, which seem plucked an hour before. After dining, you receive your coffee gratis from

the Republic of Guatamala, unless you prefer that selected and ground by the negresses of Venzuela. Then, for *rinccttc*, you can sip a newly invented bitters which a Swiss, in the costume of a bernese, hands you under the shade of an elegant chiosk, or go to the Dutch chiosk, where three beautiful, rosy girls with gold helmets give you schiedam or curacoa. If you dare run the risk, try the liquor of figs in the pavilion of Morocco, made gay by the strumming of three players, one of whom weighs one hundred and ninety kilograms with his stomach empty; or put between your lips a new kind of cigar, which, instead of a cloud of smoke, sends a glass of brandy into your mouth. Have you had enough? Ah, you wish to smoke! Very well; here are the pungent cigars of the Republic of Andorra, and the magnificent display of cigars from Cuba, of every size and form, gilded, crested and odorous—real works of art—scattered by myriads, before which an Italian smoker, exhausted from suffering, passes "sighing and trembling." All this double gallery of alimentary products is worthy of admiration for its variety and richness. It is an interminable architecture of bottles, which rise in

towers, winding stairs, many colored and sparkling steps; a multitude of little temples gleaming with gold and crystals, which could cover the statues of deities, and do cover salted pork; a splendor of little theatres, altars, thrones and libraries full of dainties, so gracefully arranged and decorated that the great painter of the *halles* of Paris could make of it a magnificent picture for one of his future romances.

The most beautiful spectacle is that presented by the people. At certain hours the enclosure of the Exhibition is more densely populated than many cities. The visitors enter by twenty gates. The avenues, vestibules, galleries, traversable passages and the labyrinth of the Halles of the Champs de Mars, is one black swarm, and you have great trouble in not getting lost—especially in the "foreign sections," where the vendors themselves seem a pleasing sort of anthropological exposition. There are a great number of beautiful English girls who work at their régisters, intent and impassible, in the midst of that confusion, as if they were at home. The Japanese—dressed like Europeans—talk and play, seated around their small tables, perhaps with a little ostentation, to give themselves the appear-

ance of people who feel quite comfortable at their places in the heart of western civilization; and in fact have already so assumed the air of home, that scarcely any one looks at them. The Chinese, on the contrary, are always surrounded by a circle of curious people, on whom they cast, from time to time, a disdainful glance, which reveals, like a flash of lightning, the stubborn pride of their race, and then resume their idol-like impassibility, from which only the voices of the purchasers arouse them.

One sees eastern merchants in turbans, dragging their sandals among all those marvels, and looking around idly with the same stupid and irritating indifference which they would display in their old booths at the bazars. Occasionally we find three or four enthusiasts before a face in papier-maché, or a puppet that moves its arms. There are many Algerines, Arabs, Moors and Negroes. Bands of Spahis meet, enveloped in their great white mantles, but they no longer have the bold faces of 1859. The pride of the old African army no longer shines in their eyes. How a lost cause changes the face! Here and there one sees copper-colored faces and some of those harlequin-like costumes of the

countries bordering on China. Besides these there is an immovable and silent multitude of people from every country, who produce a curious effect. Every moment you graze the elbow of some one, who seems to be a living being, and is only a great puppet, colored and well dressed, which makes you open your eyes with astonishment. There are savages from Peru, people from Australia with their woolly heads, mediæval warriors, elegantly dressed ladies, Italian soldiers, peasants from Denmark, Malay laundresses, civil guards of Spain, and Indians, Kafirs and Hottentots, who suddenly appear before you, fixing their dreamy eyes upon you, like phantoms. The spectacle is still further varied and enlivened by a large number of ladies moving around in wheel-chairs, or children's carriages, drawn by a servant, or pushed from behind by their husbands and followed by their children; weighty matrons, who fill every portion of the little vehicle; tall English girls, who sit curled up with their knees on a level with their chins; decrepid old men, who are probably enjoying here the last pleasures of life; old paralytic patricians, and marvellously blonde and rosy cupids of northern countries, who form alto-

gether, in that labyrinth of streets lined with glass houses, a species of comic corso worthy of the pencil of Cham. In the street of the nations, under the shade of little straw huts, many people are eating breakfast on their laps, as if they were travelling, and the children go to get water at the fountains of Japan and Italy; others munch their bread and ham as they walk along; some happy couples are sweetly sleeping on the chairs in the midst of the crowd; other couples, who have brought their love to the Exposition, take advantage of two neighboring huts to indulge in a few secret caresses. It is very amusing too to study the different types of the visitors in the halls. There are those wild horses who race hither and yon without seeing a blessed thing, apparently seized by a kind of feverish exaltation, and the patient visitors, who have laid out a programme for themselves, and move one step every quarter of an hour, meditating upon the catalogues, looking, examining and discussing the most trivial thing, and who will probably take six months to make the tour of the Champs de Mars. Among the exhibitors one sees the radiant faces of the fortunate ones, who have found glory and fortune

there, and enthrone themselves upon their benches in the midst of a crowd of curious people and purchasers; and the poor disappointed wretches, seated in their solitary corners, with bowed heads and melancholy faces, meditating upon lost hopes. In the last rooms the divans are occupied by weary visitors. You see entire families of excellent people from the country, worn out, dazed and stupefied; the papas covered with perspiration, the mammas stifled, the girls grown hunch-backed, the little ones dead with sleep; in such a state, in fact, that one is tempted to ask: "Who *did* advise you to come to the Exhibition, you poor unfortunate people?" The greatest crowd is under the large arcades of the art exhibition, and around the pavilion of the City of Paris, which raises its gayly flagged fronts in the centre of the Champs de Mars. This is the rendezvous of the *staff* of the Exposition. Here the artists, commissioners from all countries and the workmen gather and separate, the critics gesticulate wildly, the journalists take notes, the artists sketch, discussions grow warmer, the curious seek for illustrious faces, the new arrivals find each other, and the *celebrities* of the Exhibition pass amid bows and

salutations. Here is Monsieur Hardy, for instance, the architect of the palace of the Champs de Mars; here is Monsieur Duval, the director of the hydraulic works, and Messieurs Bourdais and Davioud, the architects of the palace of the Trocadero. If you happen to have a rather curious face, and have two friends walking with you, who address you with an air of respect, you can easily pass for a prince or a king who is visiting the Exhibition strictly incog., and you hear around you, here and there, the subdued murmur of a court. There is something for every kind of taste, something to satisfy all needs and repair all accidents. You can telegraph home, write your letters, have a bath, take a shock of electricity, be weighed, carried, photographed, perfumed and taken care of; there are stations for firemen, guards, pharmacies and infirmaries—nothing is lacking but the cemetery. Then there are fixed hours for study and scientific experiments, when the visitors gather at given points. Here, in the French section, they communicate to the public the works of the library of the corps of instruction; farther on, a professor explains anatomical models; in the Russian section experiments are being made

of the passage of air through walls; an American physician is showing surgical apparatus; a dentist is extracting roots with an instrument worked by steam. You can go and witness the manufacture of French cigarettes, and see the paper of Darblay's mills made, the experiments of electric light in the Russian pavilion, or those of heating and illumination in the park of the Champs de Mars. Others go to see the experiments with Bell's telephone, or telegraphic appliance, which transmits with one single wire two hundred and fifty despatches in an hour, or the semaphore of our Pellegrino; or if you like better, to read the old trials for witchcraft exhibited in the pavilion of the French Minister of the Interior. Meanwhile teachers explain new methods of instruction. All the inventors have their circle of auditors, all the new machines are in motion, the colossal albums open, the geographical maps are unfolded, the globes are turned, and a thousand instruments are being played. On every side there is some spectacle, a school or conference; the Exhibition has become an enormous international athenæum which gives us for one franc all human knowledge.

That which attracts the most people at all hours, is, however, the exhibition of Fine Arts. But I scarcely have the courage to enter it. Yet I am comforted by the thought that I am only obliged to give a confused impression of my first visit. There are eighteen galleries in a succession of pavilions which extend from one end of the Champs de Mars to the other. The entire world is here—one may truly say—the past and present, visions of the future, battles, fêtes, martyrdoms, cries of anguish and the laughs of the insane; all the great human comedy with an infinite variety of scenes, in which one turns from the palace to the hut, from deserts of ice to deserts of sand, and from sublime heights to the most mysterious depths of the earth. This is the portion of the Exhibition where the deepest impressions are made. How many tearful eyes I have seen, how many expressions of pity, sorrow and horror and how many beautiful smiles on beautiful faces remain impressed upon my memory like a reflection of that picture. The enormous museum opens with the French exposition of sculpture, followed by the rooms belonging to England. Here—to speak frankly, of all that pale, transparent style

of painting in limpid colors full of delicate thought and beautiful minutiæ, I only remember that superb glorification of warlike old age of Herkomer, called *The Invalids of Chelsea*, before which one bares his head in veneration; *The Poor of London* of Luke Fildes, which made me feel the cold of a January night and the agony of poverty without a shelter; and *Daniel among the Lions*, of Bréton Rivière, in which the sublime tranquility of the man in comparison with that group of wild beasts, famished but fascinated, subdued and overwhelmed by an invisible and superhuman power, is rendered with a force which fills the heart with the mysterious fear inspired by genius. I pass hastily before a hundred other pictures, impelled by my impatience to reach Italy, where I find a smiling crowd making love to the statues. I hear one person muttering, "Tell me that these things came from the land of Michel Angelo!" But all the faces round about express a feeling of calm and loving admiration. Before the pictures of De Nittis, the bold and fine painter of Paris and London, there is a group of people who are disputing the space, and one can easily discover from the movement of the faces,

the rapidity of the gestures, the excitement of the dialogues, that clashing of different opinions, from which fly the sparks that form the *aureola*. Some one remarks: "Beautiful pages for an illustrated paper!" But you breathe the air of the Boulevards, feel the dampness of the Thames, divine the hour, recognize those faces and live that life. In the other room I look around to see if there is a Pasini, in order to cry out to him—"Welcome, oh '*brother of the Sun!*'" His superb *Orient* is there, gazed at by a thousand thoughtful eyes. And I wish to see Michetti, the dear face of that dissolute genius, to take his cheeks between my first finger and thumb, and say to him that I adore those beautiful limbs of his bathers and the fabulous blue of his seas. Ah, here is Jenner at last! and here I observe something very singular. The people who enter with a smile on their lips, stop and frown—all faces reflect fugitively, the intent and resolute face of Jenner, as if all, for a moment, felt in their own hand, the beneficial lancet of the surgeon, and the resisting arm of the child; all are thinking, and no one speaks. Those who have moved off, either stop, or return, as if they were drawn back by the

tenacious thread of a thought. What a satisfaction this is to me! And I instantly experience another in a neighboring room in encountering the honest and benevolent face of Monteverdi which accompanies me to the Italian frontier. From thence I go into the rooms of foreign paintings, where the skies become clouded and the air grows chilly. Norway and Sweden have painted their melancholy twilights, gray autumnal mornings, strange moonlights on strange seas, and fishermen and shipwrecked crews in which the deep, sweet love of country, colored by a feeling of manly sadness, is more strongly displayed than art itself; one hundred and fifty pictures, all overwhelmed by the "*Swedish soldiers bearing the body of Charles XII,*" down the slope of a solitary road, in the snow, bleeding, sad, but proud; a beautiful and solemn picture of Œderström, conceived by the soul of a poet, and felt by the heart of a soldier. Then follow the United States. The great workman's hand of this colossus of a hundred heads is not yet accustomed to wielding the brush. I only remember the laugh of Hamilton's beautiful women and the ridiculous faces in a picture by Brown. Most of the other paintings

betray the work of artists who have left home, studied at Paris, Düsseldorf, Munich and Rome, and taken the coloring, though diluted, of their adopted countries. Then comes France, who has outdone all the rest of the world in this department. History, legend, mythology, the Napoleonic *épopée*, mundane life, portraiture, miniature and enormous pictures; mad audacity and corrupt pedantry; everything is here; but above all a great wealth of invention and thought, which reveals the powerful aid of an imaginative and popular literature, of a lively and diffused dramatic sentiment, and of the varied, full, tumultuous life in an enormous metropolis. In the first rooms I catch a glimpse of the sentimental and affected pictures of Bouguereau. Doré has placed there one of his thousand visions of a hidden world, in which one can scarcely distinguish some vague forms of terrestrial creatures and things.

Then comes that serene and classic style of Albert Maignan, and that imaginative and confused one of Isabey, in which one seems to be looking through the veil of a dream into a distance of space and time. In another room is Boulanger's picture rep-

resenting the terrible phantom of Saint Sebastian appearing before Maximian; and Moreau, who wearies and torments the mind with the phantasies of his biblical and mythological dreams, full of terrors, illusions and enigmas, which confusedly cling to one's memory like the gloomy and mysterious formulas of a conjurer. Then follow the portraits full of life and power. Dubufe presents Emile Angier, Gounod and Dumas; Durand, Girardin; Perrin, Daudet; and Thiers lives again gloriously on the canvas of Bonnat, before which a crowd gathers. Another silent and motionless group announces, in the same room, the marvellous miniatures of Meissonnier. Farther on, the elegant patrician women of Cabanel smile, and Laurens draws from all a sigh in representing together, in his noble *Marceau*, beauty, bravery and death. Going on, I find that marvellous curving of spines which has made the world smile; *L'Eminence Grise* of Gerôme, and the formidable *Executioner* of poor Henri Regnault; a superb but sad picture which serves as the cover for a sepulchre. And finally, the gigantic and tragic canvases of Benjamin Constant. Rizpah driving off the vulture from the

scaffold of the sons of Saul, and Mahomet II who is breaking into Constantinople amid ruin and death; in the same room where the poisoned slave of Sylvestre writhes under the eyes of impassible Nero, and the *David* of Ferrier raises the monstrous head of the giant. At the right hangs Duval's great Bacchanal. You leave here wearied and dazed, as if you had witnessed one of Shakespeare's tragedies, and find yourself among the enormous historical pictures of Austria-Hungary, gleaming with arms, gold and silk, and the great portraits à la Vandyck and Velasquez, which give to the place the grave and magnificent appearance of a palace. Here I would like to kiss the forehead of Thunkassy, who painted that divine head of Milton, and cry bravo before the supurb canvas of Makart, lighted up by the white face of Charles V, upon which gleams a thought as vast as his kingdom, and a never to be forgotten expression of youthful grace and serene majesty, which makes us add our applause to the noise of his triumph. Here is Don Quixote, the *Manolas*, *Majos*, the lovely portraits of Madrazo, and the *Lucrezia Romana* of Plasencia, in which we discover a touch of Goya's boldness. But there is

one wall before which the heart aches. Poor, dear Fortuny, beautiful flower of Seville, who bloomed at Rome! His masterpieces are there, warm, luminous, full of laughter and light, devoured by the eyes of a deeply touched throng—and he lies in the grave. So too, poor Zamacoïs can never come to enjoy the triumphs of his beautiful scenes representing monks and madmen, as in the Austrian rooms Cermak can never see the glistening and tear-dimmed eyes before his glorious dying Montenegrin. How many noble and beloved artists are lacking at this festival! The eye still seeks them in the crowd, while the thought wanders to distant cemeteries, and their pictures cast over all the sadness of a last farewell! In the other rooms, I have only an indistinct recollection of seas in a storm, steppes lighted by the moon, solemn sunsets over immense solitudes of snow, and dreary landscapes of Finland and Ukrania, among which appear confusedly the menacing faces of Ivan the terrible, and Peter the Great, and the bleeding bodies of Bulgarian martyrs. It seems as if art were resting here in order to raise itself again, more fresh and vigorous than before. And it does rise in Belgium, rich and inspired, bear-

ing the imprint of a particular character, and nourished by hard study and glorious traditions. A. Stevens and Villems exhibit their pictures of costumes, admirable for coloring and grace, and J. Steavens his inimitable dogs; Wauters and Cluysenaar triumphantly overcome all the great dangers of historical painting and the delicate difficulties of portraiture; and a hundred other artists vie with each other in an infinite variety of landscapes full of poetry, melancholy marine views, exquisite heads of children, clever jokes and lovely fancies, which elevate the mind and enlarge the heart. Then come Portugal and Greece; great names, but little things. Yet there are, however, some neglected and despised pictures, which make an indelible impression upon one, like the Megarian mother of Rallis, that poor fisherman's wife seated in her wretched room, with folded hands, her eyes fixed on the empty cradle, made of four rough boards, in the act of saying: "No longer there!"—while the linen clothes still fresh, give one to understand that the child has just been carried away, and upon that scene of desolation falls through the open window, a bright ray of the rising sun, which waked him every day; there is

something lacking in the expression, perhaps, but the sentiment is so sublime that it almost makes one sigh. After Greece comes the fresh and easy style of painting peculiar to Switzerland—varied in a hundred ways; the true representative of a country formed of a hundred parts and of a family of wandering artists in search of an ideal, a school and a centre of sentiments and ideas; who mingle with their rugged country, cascades, ravines, glaciers and the hurricanes of the Alps, the smiling shores of Sorrento, the arabesqued architecture of Cairo, the burning solitudes of Syria, the deserted campagna of Rome and every kind of souvenir of their varied and adventurous life; similar to that of their forefathers, who wore the uniforms of all the princes and shed their blood for every flag Switzerland is followed by Denmark, who reminds the world of her warlike glories, in the battle of Isted, by Sonne, and the naval battle of Lamera by Mastrand. It is a beautiful sight to see these people pass, every one of whom displays with love and pride their soldiers, kings, beautiful women, children, cathedrals and mountains. The feeling of sympathy which one of these, seen by itself, would not inspire in you takes

possession of you in seeing them all together; and the heart responds and assents to all those signs of love of country with an outburst of affection which takes in all the world. The other Danish pictures are landscapes showing the pale effects produced by the sun in snowy countries, on parks, feudal castles, and great forests, and familiar home scenes, ingenuously felt and rendered with scrupulous fidelity, leaving in the mind the thousand images of faces, attitudes, objects and occupations, which a month's sojourn in Denmark would do. From here I come, almost unconsciously, into the rooms devoted to Holland, where one finds a style of painting which seems clouded by the mists of great watery plains, and I see in fact, quite indistinctly, as if through a veil, the poor and infirm of Israels, the painter of misery; the beautiful marine views of Mesdag; the *poldars* of Gabriel, the cats of Henrietta Ronner, and a hundred other gray, gloomy, damp, ill-humored looking pictures, among which I seek in vain for a ray of that marvellous light of Rembrandt, or the reflection of the loud, irresistible laugh of Steen. The last is the great room belonging to Germany, magnificent and sad, in which one becomes aware

upon entering, of the enormous void left by Kaulbach. Yet it is a powerful school of painting which drinks in new life at the living fountains, and is strengthened by diffuse study, varied, bold, manly, full of sentiment and very acute in observation and aim, which awakens a pensive admiration and touches the most delicate chords of the heart. I shall never forget, either the living and speaking heads of Knaus, the flaming workshop of Menzel, or the superb cossacks of Brandt, the profound sadness of Hoff's baptism, the comical laughter of the soldiers and nurses of Werner, the admirable mother and father of Hildebrand, who, startled by a terrible presentiment, are questioning the distorted face of the sick child. And with this feeling of sadness in my heart, I leave the Exhibition of Fine Arts.

But I was seized by another thought as soon as I was outside. The thousand artists, famous or unknown, young men who sent their first inspirations there, and old ones who left us their last, passed before my mind. I saw them scattered throughout the world, in their studios full of light, opening upon solitary fields, gardens, on the sea or noisy street; and I thought how much life they had thrown into

those hundred rooms, through which I had hastily passed, how much of their souls they had put into those canvases, how many inspirations of lovers and wives, how many night-watches, how many hours of meditation, how many broken brushes, how much blood from pierced hearts, how many reminiscences of adventure and distant wanderings, what an immense *épopée* of loves, sorrows, triumphs and miseries were represented by those pictures! How many of these painters had already descended into the tomb, consumed by the tremendous fevers of art, and how many others still young and full of life would follow them! What an immense treasure of imagery of sentiment and ideas were carried away by the millions of visitors from all over the world! And thinking of these things with my eyes turned toward that long row of pavilions, I felt myself suddenly seized by such an intense feeling of affection and gratitude, that if any painter had chanced to pass me, I should certainly have thrown my arms around his neck.

The last room of the Fine Arts leads to the gallery of labor. One can scarcely fancy a stranger change of scene. Here everything is noise and bustle. You

see all the little industries at work. There are a great number of square and circular benches, which serve at the same time as workshop and store, where men, women and boys are constantly working in the midst of a crowd of curious people, who form an unbroken chain of great, black and mobile rings, reaching from one end of the immense hall to the other. Here they work in gold, tortoise-shell, ivory and mother-of-pearl; they manufacture objects in filigree, make fans, brushes, portmonnaies and watches. There is, among others, a group of workmen who are making dolls with the rapidity of conjurors, and others who manufacture flowers of linen, enamel and the feathers of tropical birds, with a facility and grace that makes them seem to bloom under their fingers. In other portions of the hall they are weaving silk, painting on porcelain, working in copper, making guttapercha and manufacturing meerschaums. In one corner you see the patient hands of Normandy working lace. In the centre of the hall they are cutting diamonds. Here there is a shower of visiting cards, there of pins, further on of buttons. On one side they are making braids and chignons, on the other baskets and boxes of straw. A

group of Indians, their heads covered with enormous turbans, are working on shawls. It is a long row of little furnaces, vibrating machines, gas jets, bowed heads, hands in motion, of people who are asking questions, and people who are answering them; a chatter, a gay bustle, a busy and rapid working, which arouses in one the mania to do something too. The high ceiling echoes noisily the acute sounds, so that they seem the joyous cries of children, the measured beat of a hundred hammers, the screeching of the files and saws, a crystalline and metallic tinkling, and the dull rumble of the multitude passing in groups, processions and bodies, like a disbanded army, in order to spread itself through the outer gardens or halls of the machinery.

Here the spectacle is worthy of an ode by Victor Hugo. At the first moment you seem to be under the arched roof of a London station. There are two galleries as long as the Champs de Mars, very broad and full of light, in which a thousand enormous machines, an army of cyclops in metal, menacing and superb, raise their heads, arms, clubs, blades, thick and intricate, up to the highest arch, producing the uproar of a battle. An immense

transformation of things is taking place on all sides. The sheet of paper comes out in the shape of an envelope, twine becomes rope, bronze is transformed into medals, brass wire is changed into pins, yarn into stockings; a piece of wood emerges in the form of fragments of furniture; the Swiss embroiderer works with three hundred needles; the English papyrograph reproduces three hundred copies of one manuscript; the soap machine cuts cakes, wraps them up and weighs them, while Marivoni's machine turns out folded newspapers; the gigantic looms of Birmingham and Manchester work beside the miner's extracting machines; the great ice machine emits a furious icy breath among the fiery exhalations of the gas machines; others cut diamonds, others tear and twist metal as if it were dough, others wash, refine, transfuse, draw, paint and write; in other portions of the hall is felt the marvellous and horrible life of monsters with a hundred mouths and hands, which irritate the nerves, deafen the ears and confuse the mind. Here and there one sees the raw material disappear into the gloomy mouths of those colossal creatures, and reappear above, some moments afterwards, half worked up, as if carried in triumph;

then hidden again, dashed below to suffer the final torments. Here the arms of giants are at work, there the fingers of a fairy. On one side work presents itself under the aspect of a bloodthirsty destroyer, between enormous iron teeth and claws of steel, which crush and tear to pieces with an infernal racket, in which one hears the confused sound of human laments, among an intricate, dizzy and ferocious set of wheels that would reduce to powder a titan as if he were a trifle in glass. On another side the tame monster caresses the imprisoned material, rolls it into balls, smooths it, and polishes it as if it were only at play. Other colossal machines, like those for weaving, make strange and mysterious motions, almost human in appearance, with a certain languid grace peculiar to feminine movements, which inspire one with an inexplicable spirit of repugnance. as if they were living beings whose form one could not understand.

Among the large members of all these immense laborers there moves, like a secret life, an indescribable mass of little wheels, which seem motionless, of saws that look like wires, of delicate and almost invisible connections which vibrate, tremble and

shake, making appear larger (in comparison with their own littleness) the enormous wheels, colossal hinges, titanic boilers, huge belts, cranes, pistons, and monstrous pipes which rise like monumental columns, and succeed each other in one unending row, presenting the appearance of some strange deformed city of metals, in which a legion of condemned people or madmen struggle with their chains. But man too works; a large number of women are sewing on machines; workmen tend the great machines, and mechanics and artisans from all countries carelessly dressed, watch, take notes, and rush everywhere among the pistons and wheels at the risk of their lives; among whom one sees here and there pale and thin faces, but full of life, over which flashes the gleam of an iron will and an implacable ambition. Who knows? obscure workmen to-day, perhaps glorious inventors to-morrow. All the enormous gallery is filled with the bustle of work, and at first the turmoil tires and saddens one. But little by little, becoming accustomed to it, and fixing your mind upon it, in that frightful turmoil of whistles, puffings, bursts, grindings, groans and shrieks, you hear the deep voice of the multitude,

the exciting cry of the struggle and the formidable hurrah of human victory. The man who, upon entering, felt himself crushed, after regaining his self-consciousness, contemplates that immense power, set in motion and controlled by human thought, with a sense of pride, in which his being is strengthened and elevated. Then that immense arsenal of peaceful arms, the banners as large as sails which wave from the ceiling, filled by the air made by those innumerable wheels, those savage monuments of cordage and nets, pyramids of spades which serve to break up the deserts of the new hemisphere, the columns of fishing tackle for catching the great cetaceous of polar seas, the gigantic trunks of virginal forests, the colossal armor of the divers, the towers of merchandise, the lighthouses revolving among the clouds of smoke, the jets of water and showers of vapor from the machines worked by steam, this grand and terrible spectacle, saluted by the detonations of the gas machines, the blast of the fog-horns, the solemn peal of the distant organs (which carry into that inferno the poetry of hope and prayer), little by little take possession of you, and stir all the faculties of your mind, start all

the springs of activity and courage, light in your heart the fever of battle, making you leave the place with your mind full of bold designs and glorious resolutions.

From the hall of the French machinery, you enter a long avenue all rose color, and from thence * * But there is not one reasonable reader who expects me to give a description of the so-called *annexations* of the palace of the Champs de Mars, which form in themselves a second universal exposition. There are two miles of gardens, sheds, pavilions, rustic houses, in which recommence the series of museums and workshops, sufficient in number to keep one busy for a month. These are only occupied by *specialists*. The majority of the visitors only go there for the sake of the fresh air. Yet here one can get an idea of the cost of that transitory city, and the expense of keeping it up. It is something that really startles one. You must take into consideration the labor of grading it, for which five hundred thousand cubic metres of earth were excavated and carried off; imagine the enormous trench which runs under the palace of the Champs de Mars, and distributes into sixteen large currents the

condensed air from the ventilators; picture to yourself the powerful action of the great *generators*, which provide steam to the motive machines; the tremendous work of the thirty motive machines which transmit life to all the machinery in the Exhibition; the perpetual motion of the formidable pumps which draw the water from the Seine and distribute it, through a labyrinth of subterranean reservoirs and canals, among the conduits of the Champs de Mars, basins, fountains, sewers, elevators of the towers, and the cascade of the Trocadero; think of the number of railroad tracks which covered that space during the work of construction, and the innumerable machines which aided man in placing the enormous things in their respective positions; then recall to mind the immense labor of the last month accomplished by an army of workmen from every country, swarming on the roofs, cupolas, in the depths of the earth, suspended by ropes, standing on dizzy heights, in groups, in bands, in chains, night and day, by the light of torches, gleam of electric light, amid clouds of dust and mist, urged on by thousands of voices in a hundred tongues, in the midst of a tumult like the sea in a storm and

the tremors of impatience of the world, and in fine, remember that there issued from this show, almost unexpectedly, that marvellous caravansary of a hundred nations, full of treasures, vegetation and life, and that twenty-four months before all this had only been a desert; then one can no longer refrain from giving vent to that feeling of admiration, which at one's first entrance was disturbed by a disagreeable effect produced by the general appearance of things.

One ought to see this great spectacle in the evening from the high galleries of the Trocadero. At that height, embracing with one glance, as from the summit of a mountain, that immense plain full of memories, which witnessed the symbolical fêtes of the revolution and heard the hurrahs of the armies of Marengo and Waterloo; that enormous and magnificent palace, upon which wave all the flags of the earth; the great river, vast parks, thousands of roofs, the hundred torrents of humanity winding through that immense enclosure, inundated with the warm golden light of sunset, the mind opens to a thousand new thoughts. One thinks of the millions of human beings who worked to fill that endless museum, from the glorious artists of the world

to the solitary laborers and those unknown cottagers; of the thousands of things gathered there, on which have fallen the tear of the working woman and the sweat of those condemned to hard labor; of the treasures acquired at the cost of numberless lives; of the victories obtained by the accumulated labor of ten generations; the riches of kings, copy-books of children, the shapeless sculptures of slaves, all placed together under those arches in a sort of holy equality for the inspection of the world; of the fabulous journeys those works and products have made, sent down the mountain sides on sledges, carried by the caravan through forests and across deserts, brought from the bottom of the sea and the bowels of the earth, transported across immense rivers and amid the storms on the ocean, as if on a sacred pilgrimage; of the thousand hopes that accompanied them, the thousand ambitions that were founded upon them, the numberless ideas springing up from the comparison of them with other things, of new undertakings that will arise from these triumphs, of fabulous tales that will be repeated under the huts of the most distant colonies; and finally that, thanks to all this, thousands of hands which

would never have met, clasped each other; that for a time many hatreds, as if in virtue of a truce from God, were quieted; that millions of men, gathered here, will scatter all over the earth, carrying with them a rich treasure of beloved names, unknown before; of new admiration, new sympathies, new hopes, and a grander and more powerful sentiment still, that of the love of one's country. We think of these things, and applaud without doubt the Exhibition as the means of all this good; but more than the Exhibition, we bless that august law, that holy and immortal strife, Labor. One would like to see it, symbolized as a deity, in an immense and superb statue, which should have its feet planted in the bowels of the earth and its head higher than the mountains, and say to it, "Glory to thee, second creator of the earth, formidable but tender lord; we consecrate to thee the vigor of our youth, the tenacity of our manhood, the wisdom of old age, our enthusiasm, hope and blood; thou shalt soften our sorrows, strengthen our affections, calm the soul, dispense fruitful rests, fraternize mankind and pacify the world, sublime friend and divine consoler!"

III.

VICTOR HUGO.

There is a writer in France who has attained such a degree of glory and power that no literary ambition can ever dream of surpassing him. He is, by almost universal consent, the first living poet of Europe, and is nearly eighty years old, having been born in the second year of the century—*Le siècle avait deux ans.* He was already celebrated fifty years ago, when Alexander Dumas said to his friends, in speaking of him: "*Nous sommes tous flambés!*" and he (Dumas) had only heard the drama entitled *Marion Delorme.* His name and works are scattered all over the world, and a hundred thousand copies of one of his new books disappear in a few days. His fifty volumes are as full of life and youth as if they had all seen light but a few years ago. The life of this man has been a con-

tinual warfare—first, a literary conflict, he being banished from the theatres; afterwards a political one, being defeated in the Assembly and persecuted in exile—the one was a war against classicality, the other against the Emperor, both of which were won by him. No other writer was more fought against, and no other, in his old age, sat upon a higher throne, raised upon the spoils of his enemies. Phalanxes of furious adversaries barred his way in the streets; he passed, and they disappeared. His great rivals descended one after the other before his eyes into the tomb. A series of tragical misfortunes scattered his family. All the branches of the oak fell, struck by lightning, one upon the other, but the old trunk remained firm and immovable. He passed through all kinds of trials, was poor, persecuted, proscribed, alone, a wanderer, vituperated and derided; but he quietly continued his enormous work with a marvellous obstinacy. At times, when he appeared to be dead, he suddenly rose transfigured with works full of new power and new promise. He left the imprint of his gigantic steps upon all the roads of literature. He did not try, but assailed all the fields of art, and broke out of them raging, over-

throwing, destroying and leaving on every side the traces of a battle. At the tribunal, in the theatre, at home, in poetry and in criticism, in youth and in old age, he was always in a manner audacious, obstinate, unbridled, aggressive, rough, furious and savage. A legion of fanatical writers gathered, and still gather around him, fighting in his defence and in his name—a thousand choice intellects, at various times, shown with no other light than the reflections of his genius; others attracted in his orbit, disappeared in his bosom; others strove furiously all their lives to efface from their foreheads the imprint that he had left there. Painting, sculpture and music took possession of the creatures of his imagination, and made them popular, for the second time, in all civilized countries. An immense wealth of fancies, sentences, metaphors, fashions and new forms of art, profusely scattered by him, live and flourish in all the different literatures of Europe. He has been for half a century the continual subject of warm and fruitful discussions. Almost all the new literary questions have foundation in his works, or circulate by force around them, and he presides, silent and invisible, at the contests.

Yet all these contests regarding him, in France, at least, have almost entirely ceased. His age, his fortunes, immense fame, and the powerful vitality of his works (invigorated by recent triumphs), the great popularity of his name, continually kept alive by his words and presence, have almost placed him above and beyond criticism. The most acrimonious of his literary enemies, of our time, have been silenced, and his most ferocious political adversaries assail the republican, but respect the poet, as a glory of France. He who will not recognize him as a dramatic poet, acknowledges him as a novelist, and he who repulses him as a novelist adores him as a lyric poet. Others who detest his literary taste, accept his ideas; those who combat his ideas are enthusiastic about his forms. He who does not admire any of his works, admires and exalts the imposing grandeur of them as a whole. No one contests his genius, and no one in speaking of it to strangers, appears indifferent or hostile to the homage which is rendered it, but, on the contrary, rather proud of it. Beside this, the political atmosphere of the moment is favorable to him. He is a popular poet and a victorious tribune, wearing a

crown of laurel like the sacred aureola of the tutelar genius of his country. He has arrived at that degree of glory beyond which lies only Death. His house is like a palace. Writers and artists, of all countries, princes and working-men, women and youths wonderfully enthusiastic, go to visit him. Every one of his appearances in public is a triumph. His portrait is everywhere, and his name resounds at every topic. He is already spoken of as a glory consecrated for centuries, and is overwhelmed with those measureless and solemn eulogies which are only bestowed upon the dead. He is still full of life, force, ideas and designs, and announces at every moment the publication of some new work. Such is the man of whom I intend writing to-day—after the International Exhibition—Victor Hugo. Both subjects are, as it seems to me, equally interesting.

II.

I believe that in expressing what I think of Victor Hugo, I am reiterating very nearly the opinion of almost all the younger men of my age. There is no one among us, certainly, who does not

remember the days, when he, a youth, devoured the first volumes of Hugo that fell into his hands. It was, without doubt, a new, profound, confused, and never-to-be-forgotten emotion for all. We have all asked ourselves from time to time, laying down our book, What kind of a man is this? Sweet and tremendous, fantastic and profound, insensate and sublime at the same time, he places beside a rhetorical figure which is revolting, the revelation of a great truth, eliciting an exclamation of surprise. With the same power he makes us feel the sweetness of a lover's kiss and the horror of a crime. He is ingenuous as a child, ferocious as a bloodthirsty man, affectionate as a woman, mystical as a prophet, violent as an orator of the convention, and sad as a man without affection and without hope. He knows how to express everything, the vague sensations of infancy, over which we have tormented our minds a thousand times, the first inexplicable torments of youthful love, the most secret struggles in the heart of a child, and the conscience of an assassin, secret depths of the soul, which we feel within us, but into which the eye of our mind had never penetrated, and outlines of feeling that we

thought rebels to human language. He embraces the universe with his mind.

He has, if I may so express myself, two souls, which sweep over two worlds at the same time, and every work of his bears the imprint of this double mind. Who has not made this observation a hundred times? Above, there is his eternal "*ciel bleu*" which occurs at every page, the firmament traversed a thousand times, the planets continually invoked, the angels, the dawns, the oceans of light, a thousand dreams and visions of future life,—a world all ideal, into which he penetrates like one in ecstacy, transporting with him the dazzled and bewildered reader, shadows upon shadows, his eternal *ombre*, his abysses, *gouffres*, baths, sewers, courts of the miraculous, hangmen, toads, filth, deformity and poverty, everything in fact, which is most horrible and unnatural upon the earth. The field of his imagination has no limit—*Ravicinate*, *Cosetta* and *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Roland* of the *Legende des Siécles*, and *Quasimodo*, *Déa and Marie Tudor*, his virgins dead at fifteen years of age, his galley slaves, his Sultans, his imperial guards, his beggars and his monks, in these you seem to have before you not the works

of one man, but of a legion of poets. Run through all his creations—they leave the impression of an enormous *épopée* of fragments, which extends from Cain to Napoleon the Great, and a confused memory of divine loves, titanic struggles, unheard of poverty, and horrible deaths, seen through a terrifying mist, broken here and there by floods of light, in which are swarming a myriad of personages half real and half ghostly, that confound the mind. All his works seem colored by the reflection of a hidden life that he has lived in other times, in a mysterious world, to which he seems to refer vaguely at every page, and at whose doors he continually appears, impatient of the limits that have been assigned to him on earth. An immense phantasmagoria of things unknown to humanity, appear to torment him continually, like a feverish vision. Everything that is strangest and most obscure on the boundaries which separate the real world from the world of dreams, he seeks and makes his own. The fabulous Kings of Asia, the superstitions of all centuries, the oldest legends of all countries, the gloomiest landscapes of the earth, the most horrible monsters of the sea, the most terrible phenomena of nature,

the most tragical agonies, all the witchcraft, all the deliriums, and all the hallucinations of the human mind, have passed through his pen. He sees everything by, I do not know what marvellous prism; through which the reader always sees him. At the back of all his scenes, and behind all his characters appears his proud and enormous head. Almost all his creations wear the colossal imprint of his seal, and speak the language of his genius; they are, like him, great poets or great dreamers; statues upon whose foreheads he has engraved his name; masks with outlines more than human, which one sees enlarged tremendously, as if through the fogs of polar seas; or illuminated by the light of a theatrical exhibition which transfigures them—like *Javert*, *Gymplaine*, *Triboulet*, *Simondain*, *Gilliat*, *Ursus*, *Quasimodo and Jean Valjean* for instance, or his *Napoleon III*, comically represented as a vulgar malefactor, alike in everything. There are very few personages of flesh and blood who resemble us common mortals. Thus his *Cathedral of Nôtre Dame* is converted by him into a monument, as enormous and formidable as a mountain in the Alps. All of his creations are, as he says, of the waves of

a sea in a storm, *Melangées de Montagne et de Songe*. Only in the first moment of the conception, is he a quiet and faithful observer; then his invincible lyrical nature bursts forth, and he seizes his creation with a powerful hand, and carries it above the earth. From the first to the last page he is always present, a vain and violent despot, who makes the reading a struggle to us.

He drives us forward with blows, excites, crushes, raises, shakes, humiliates and overturns us in his precipitous flight, without giving any sign of being aware of our existence. We balance rapidly between the most contradictory sentiments that reading can excite, from irritated ennui to ardent enthusiasm, as if we were balls in his hand. Eternally long pages follow each other, in which Hugo is no longer himself. He misleads, wanders, groping in the darkness, and raves. We no longer hear the words of the man, but the mumbling and ravings of a madman. Enormous periods fall upon enormous periods, in avalanches dark and heavy, or little cuts upon little cuts, thick and raging like hailstones, while vacuity, absurdity, insane hyperbole and pedantry struggle with and crowd each other. Victor Hugo a pedant?

Yes, even this. When he explains to us a hundred times the idea which we seized at the first moment; when he shows us slowly and obstinately, one by one, the different sides of a stone he believes to be a treasure, and which is in reality a false diamond. During that time, while we nod or tremble, the pitiless criticisms of critics, the anger of the classicists, the anathemas of the pedants, the derision of his numberless adversaries come to our mind, and we are ready to cry: They are right! But when we have reached the bottom of the page, there is a thought which makes us spring to our feet and exclaim: No, they are wrong! A sentence which fastens itself upon the brain and heart for a lifetime; one sublime word that compensates us for all, and Hugo is there again, erect and gigantic, upon a pedestal which was tottering. This is his great power; the sudden leap, the unexpected word which startles us, the unforeseen flash which illumines the vast and unknown region, the door quickly opened and shut, through which we catch a glimpse of the prodigy; "*un grand coup dans la poitrine*," as Zola would say, which takes away one's breath for a moment, and leaves us frightened and exhausted. It is not the

eagle freeing himself on the wing; it is the mass bursting from the volcano, touching the clouds and again falling. His art lies herein: a long and patient labor, which prepares an unlooked for effect. He has no regard for us while arranging it, but wearies and provokes us; is a disdainful and brutal workman, who notices neither our impatience nor our censure. His faults are as great as his genius; not slight deformities, but colossal humpbacks, which make us distort our faces. The construction of the greater portion of his novels is grotesque. There are ridiculous episodes, brutal expedients, unlikelihoods boldly accumulated, threads of stories madly broken and reknotted, rambles, or rather furious races, whose aim one cannot see, and which present at every step a precipice. But he will lead us there whenever he wishes to, dragging us (resisting, staggering and breathless), trampling upon reason, good taste, good sense and truth, and at a certain point you turn away, crying: "No, Hugo, I will not follow thee!" leaving him to flee away alone. Where has he gone? Has he fallen? Ah! there he is on the height, his forehead gilded by the sun. He has conquered, and he is right. But he has everything

with which to fight and win—the audacity, strength and the arms, together with the genius and patience. He was born a poet, and has made himself one.

He has opened within himself, with a pertinacious hand, the deepest vein of his treasures. Every one of his works is a laborious excavation, at which we assist in reading, while hearing the deep drawing of his breath. His art is indeed a strange thing. He does not present us with the finished work, the complete and ultimate result of his strength; but makes us follow all the secret processes of his mind, makes us count and touch all the stones with which he intends erecting the building, witness all his fruitless attempts and all the successive falls of those portions badly constructed, and then we see the edifice completed, but surrounded and laden with the rubbish which he disdains to sweep away. His work is a strange mixture of the patience of a worker in mosaic and the haste of an inspired painter. He writes as Goya painted. Now excavates—smooths, caresses his own work, slowly, almost sleepily, minutely and scrupulously; he amuses himself by rolling out accurate catalogues of names and things, in explaining his own conceptions with interminable similes

diligently conducted, or proceeds with the compasses, seeks symmetry, discourses, corrects, adds, modifies, rectifies, blends, chisels and polishes. Suddenly a great inspiration strikes him, and then he throws away the delicate brush, and like Goya, paints hastily with anything that falls into his hand, puts on the colors with a sponge, throws on great spots with the dish-cloth and the besom, and gives the touches of sentiment with furious dashes of the thumb which burst the canvas. His style is all fine chiselling, granite trimmings, points of iron and veins of gold, full of roughness and dark backgrounds, broken here and there into great gashes, through which one sees confused and distant prospects; now simple to scholastic simplicity, now arranged with the sapient art of a thinker; at times limpid water, and seas in a storm upon which float roseate clouds that reflect the sun, or dark ones from which the lightning bursts. New and powerful imageries rise by myriads under his pen, and ideas spring around, winged and gleaming from his head, sometimes dimmed by the richness, and crushed by the weight of the armor. He does not spend, but lavishes with a free hand, and wastes the inexhausti-

ble treasures of his expressive power with the fury of a maddened gambler. His own language is not sufficient for him. He borrows the jargon of the common people, the rascally language of the galleys, the unformed and illogical stammering of children; interlards his prose with the foreign words of a hundred nations, and with metaphors belonging to all literatures; and constructs proudly a language of his own, all full of colors and brilliancy, full of enigmas and licences, powerful laconicisms and inimitable delicacies, trivial, technical, academical, vaporous, brutal, or solemn according to need; thus, after reading his works it does not seem as if we had been hearing the language of one people or one century, but a vast and confused language of a future time, for which reason there is nothing inexplicable or strange about it. He takes advantage of the expressive power, as he does of the courage of his genius, and thus entangles and envelopes himself in his own thought, and wanders therein as in a labyrinth, without being able to find the exit. But even in his wanderings he is grand. Also in those labored, and abstruse pages, in which, wishing to explain the inexplicable, he tries on all sides his

own conceptions, and accumulates metaphors upon metaphors, comparisons upon comparisons, and recurs fruitlessly to his mysterious language of light and shade, shadow and abyss of the unknown and *unfathomable;* but all his strongest and richest language does not suffice to render even a faint idea of that monstrous and ruthless something which he has in mind. In those pages the cold pedants find with joy passages quite open to criticism which divides and destroys, but the soul of the artist feels the breath of the Titan who is struggling against a superhuman power, and witnesses those powerful efforts with a feeling of astonishment and respect, like one of those spectacles in which a man risks his life. It sometimes happens too, that in reading his works, upon reaching a certain point, the want of equal balance in the faculties, the continuous prevalence of the unbridled fancy over reason, and the excessive frequency of the digressions and falls weary you,—the flashes of genius are no longer sufficient to compensate you for the continued sacrifices you have to make to your good sense. You are satiated, indignant, sometimes nauseated ; you feel the need of resting after that torture, return

with pleasure to your sensible, vigorous and always equal writers, and find yourself once more in the real world, blessing logic and regaining your dignity as a man and reader. You leave Victor Hugo in a corner for months, sometimes years, and it seems as if you were rid of him forever. Nonsense! He is waiting for you. The day finally arrives, in which there comes an enthusiasm for which you wish an outlet, a sorrow that demands consolation, an instinctive need of the terrible and strange that forces you toward these books. Then all the still enthusiasm awakes tumultuously. He seizes you again, subdues you. You are his, and relive in him for another period of your life. This is because the great outlines of his works are those of a genius. The abuse he makes of a sublime conception, offends you while reading; but as soon as the scattered or excessive details have been forgotten, the conception remains indellibly impressed upon your mind, and the more it becomes purified with time, the grander it seems, and the grander it becomes in truth. His great ideas and sentiments are so fine that they overpower the minor defects of his art, as do the columns of an ancient temple the rubbish

scattered at their base. And from this arises the strange fact that he has more ardent admirers of his creations than faithful readers of his works, and that many of his admirers only know him through fragments of his books, or the inspirations that the other arts have drawn therefrom. Who can forget *Hernani*, *Triboulet*, the bell-ringer of *Nôtre Dame*, the love of *Ruy Blas*, or the desperation of *Fantine?* And who can forget the shudders of terror which he has made run through our veins, or the tears he has drawn from our eyes? He can do anything, is grand in tragedy and insuperable in the idyl. We have all heard *Esmeralda's* bones crushed on the bed of torture, and have been face to face with death, when he presents it in all its horrors as in that of *Claude Frollo* suspended from the cornice of the Cathedral, maddened, as on the barricades of Rue St. Denis, epic, as on the field of Waterloo, infinitely sad, as amid the snows of Russia, or solemnly lugubrious, as in the shipwreck of the *Comprachicos*. And he is the same man who makes the most delicate cords of the soul vibrate with superhuman power; the author of the *Revenant*, over which millions of mothers sob, the author of that celestial idyl of

the *Rue Plumet;* of the holy agony of *Jean Valjean*, which rends the soul, and of those marvellous verses in which *Triboulet* expends in weeping the immeasurable and humble tenderness of fatherly love. No —never have sweeter words, gentler prayers, more passionate cries of love or bursts of affection and generosity more noble and potent, issued from the heart of a poet. At such a time Victor Hugo is great, good, venerable, august, and there is no human soul who has not blessed and loved him in these pages. In solemn moments of life, beside a deathbed, during a great conflict of conscience, his verses pass through the mind like flashes of lightning, and resound in the ear like wise and tender counsels, for he has felt, understood and said everything; has expressed tremendous despair, and sublime resignation; and there is no human sorrow to which he has not said a word of comfort; nor a misfortune in the world over which he has not shed tears. He is the loving and terrible godfather of all kinds of misery, of the disowned ones of nature and those abandoned by the world, of those who have no bread, of those without country, liberty, hope, or light. This is his true and incontestable greatness.

There is no other modern writer who has exercised with a greater number of works and with a more intrepid obstinacy this glorious apostolate; who has wielded a more powerful pencil in depicting misery, a sharper anatomical knife in laying open broken hearts, a more magic chisel in carving the heroes of misfortune, a hotter iron for stamping the foreheads of those whom he afflicts, or a more delicate hand in caressing the brows of those who are suffering. He is a great assaulter and a great defender; has fought in all arenas, has climbed every summit and descended into every depth—and this is worthy of admiration in him, that no matter how low he has descended, he has never been abased. His hand has remained uncontaminated amid all the filth through which his pen has waded. He has never debased his art. He is austere and superb. He neither bends nor laughs. His smile is only a mask, behind which one catches a glimpse of his pale and knitted brow. A kind of fatal sadness pervades all his works. Even in his great and constant aspirations to virtue, concord, peace, and the redemption of the oppressed and unhappy, there is always something gloomy and melancholy, as if the element

of hope were lacking. All his books end with a heartrending cry, and all the voices coming from his works form, reunited, a solemn lament, mingled with prayer and menace. His own belief in God, that which he calls the supreme certainty of his reason, is perhaps rather a powerful aspiration of his heart and an immense pasturage for his boundless imagination, than a fixed faith, in which his soul reposes; Faith is a spring, necessary to him, of torrents of poetry, and God is a personage of his novels and songs. From any side in which we look at him, something strange and not clearly explicable appears in him. The man is merged in the writer. You stretch out your hand to touch him, and instead of human flesh, you come in contact with an unknown substance, which perplexes you. His figure, veiled, rises, descends, approaches, withdraws, and never presents for any length of time precise and fixed outlines upon which you can immutably fasten your mind. And thus you weary yourself for years about his works without ever succeeding in forming an opinion of them, which you are not obliged to alter from time to time. They offer a thousand portions open to the criticisms of a child,

and present a myriad of irresistible aspects for the admiration of mankind. You can find little fault with him who picks them mercilessly to pieces, yet do not entirely agree with him who is passionately enthusiastic about them. Destroy them with reasoning—they rise again of themselves, little by little, in your mind, more majestic and firmer than before. Be disposed, on the contrary, to adore them blindly, and you will find yourself obliged at every moment to stifle the thousand voices of protest which issue from your heart and reason. Only one thing is incontestable, and it is that you cannot refuse this man the august and solemn title of Genius. His most pronounced adversary feels at the bottom of his heart that the mere word *intellect* does not suffice for him. You may prefer to him a thousand other geniuses; yet you are forced to recognize the fact that his head towers above all the others of that legion. And it is difficult to believe that repugnance to his character, disparity of taste and ideas, or partial dislikes, can have so much power over a man as to make him deny the greatness, which the creations, struggles, triumphs, errors and undertakings of this old man, form together. For my part, I think, of

his fifty volumes, full of inspirations and fatiguing labor, in which he reveals with over-powering genius an indomitable will and a physique of iron. I think of the torrents of life that have issued from his breast, of the intense love he displays, the mild anger and implacable hatred which he provoked and which reigned in his heart; I recall his life from the time he played, a boy, under the eyes of his mother in the garden of the *Feuillantines*; I see him at sixteen, when he wrote in fifteen days (to gain a wager) the burning pages of *Bug Jargal*; and think of the time when he bought the first shawl for his wife with the money of *Han d'Island*; I picture him to myself, as proud and impassible amid the applause of the assemblies, called forth by his temerous words. I see him humbly serving the forty poor children seated around his table at Hauteville-House. I fancy him grave and sad, amid the crowd, before the hundred illustrious tombs over which he uttered those words full of majesty and sweetness. I see him in the streets of Paris in the midst of that reverent multitude, dismayed and full of years, following the biers of his sons; then too, in those feverish night watches, which he describes so powerfully,

when in the distance and solemn stillness of the night, he heard the blast of Silva's horn, and the echo of Gennaro's cry; I see him take part at the *Thèatre Français,* fifty years after its first representation, in the noisy triumph of *Hernani,* saluted by the first writers and artists of France, as their re-elected and re-anointed prince, and think of his superb *Orient,* his tremendous *Middle Ages, Prière pour tous,* of the infanta who loses the rose while Phillip the Second loses the Armada, of the charge of the Cuirassiers of the guards against the column of Welington, of the little shoe of Esmeralda, the agony of Eponine, and of all the creatures of the mysterious and gleaming world which issue from his brain; of his exile, his misfortunes, his 77 years; and I feel a hand that makes me bow my head in reverent admiration.

III

Victor Hugo is certainly one of those authors who inspire in one a most ardent desire to see him, because his varied characteristics as a writer, give rise to the query as to which one of them his appearance as a man corresponds. Is it to the Hugo

who terrifies us, or to the one that makes us weep? So we find it difficult to imagine him as benevolent and bloodthirsty at the same time. I remember passing many hours as a youth, in a shady garden, with one of his works in my hand, trying to picture him in my imagination, drawing and redrawing his face and form a hundred times, without ever succeeding in producing a portrait that thoroughly satisfied me. His image in indistinct outlines was always before me, but the man himself was a myth. I could not account for the feeling with which he inspired me. Sometimes, it seemed to me, that if I should see him, I should run to greet him like a son; at others, I felt that in meeting him suddenly (overcome by a feeling of diffidence and terror) I should get out of his way, and say in an undertone to my companions, "Stand aside, Hugo is passing by!" He was the man who had driven me with my heart full of tenderness into my mother's arms, but he was also the man who had made me spring up in bed many times in the middle of the night, startled by the sudden apparition of the five coffins of Lucrezia Borgia. I felt for him an affection full of trepidation and suspicion, but the desire to see him was intense

and went on increasing with years. How great is the power of genius.!

You arrive in an enormous city, and pass from amusement to amusement, emotion to emotion, among an immense and noisy populace, people from every country, masterpieces of the arts and industries of the whole world, and amid a thousand spectacles, grandeurs, and seductions. All this is, however, only a secondary consideration to you. Between you and that tremendous spectacle arises the image of a man whom you have never seen, whom you will perhaps never see, who is not even aware of your existence, and that image occupies all your mind and heart. In that ocean of heads you seek for his alone. Every time an old man passes, who reminds you of him, in the distance, a voice within you cries out, It is he! and you become excited. The great city talks to you of nothing but that man. The towers of the cathedrals are peopled by the images of his brain. At every turning of the streets you meet some creature of his imagination, the theatre fronts remind you of his triumphs, the trees in the gardens whisper his verses and the waters of the Seine seem to you to murmur his

name. Then you make a heroic resolution, demand a favor, long contemplated, of a friend. And no one can imagine the effect produced upon you by these words: "Rue de Clichy, No. 20."

IV.

There is one thing, however, which makes many of the admirers of Victor Hugo who desire to visit him hesitate from doing so, and this is, that he is accused of being remarkably vain,—certain it is, that he thinks a great deal of himself, and does not conceal the fact. Everyone knows what he said, when he was quite young, to the actress Mars, who took the liberty of criticizing his verses at the rehearsal of *Hernani*: "Madamoiselle, you forget with whom you are dealing. You have great talent; I do not deny it, but *I* have great talent also, and deserve some regard!" I leave to others the answer to this question: whether, in some cases, an immense amount of self-conceit is not an element of genius—that which gives the impulse to those enormous undertakings; and whether, admitting the artistic character of Victor Hugo, it is possible to imagine a modest Victor Hugo. I confine myself

to the consideration of the fact. Yes, Victor Hugo ought to be tremendously proud. He, for example, (a noted fact) does not admit criticism. "Genius," he says, "is a block. You must accept it entire, or reject it entire." The work of Genius is a temple which you must enter with bowed head and in silence. "*On ne chicane pas le génie.*" Admire, be thankful and be silent. Genius has no defects. Its defects are only the wrong side of its different qualities. That is all. He has proclaimed this clearly in his work on Shakespeare, in which he has used the English tragic poet in order to tell the world what he thinks of himself. The portrait he draws of Shakespeare is his own; that deification that he makes of genius, which, for a man who believes in God, is almost sacrilegious, is, in fact, his apotheosis; in that ocean to which he compares great poets, you see his own greatness reflected before all others; that mountain which has every kind of climate and every sort of vegetation, is Victor Hugo. In those lists that he makes at every page, of the geniuses of all times and countries from Job to Voltaire, one understands, could swear in fact, that, when he has reached the last name,

he was on the point of adding his own, but refrained from doing so, not on account of his modesty, but out of respect for the *Convenances*. He treats all these great people as his equals. All geniuses on the other hand, (this is one of his ideas) are equal. The region of geniuses is the region of equality. He speaks of Dante as of a brother. But beside these there are a thousand instances of the consciousness he feels of his own greatness. The magnificent boldness with which he attacks science and with which he faces, in passing, all the highest problems of philosophy; the courage with which he displays his literary licenses, as if he were certain that, stamped by him, they would become current coin and a common riches; the solemn intonation of his prefaces, which announces the work as a social event; the scrupulous care with which he gathers, or has gathered, all the most insignificant words and actions of his life. When he wishes to play the modest man, he produces the opposite effect, so inexpert is he in that art, and so accustomed is he to pass the boundaries of everything. As when he begins a letter, for instance: "*An Obscure Workman*," and thus, under the enforced quiet with which he replies

to observations of Lamartine about "Les Miserables," one can hear the smothered roar of the wounded lion. The prodigality of his praises betrays the man who feels that he is casting them from such a height, that he need not fear the pride which may arise from them, even if it become measureless. Then he freely shows his own soul. Upon one occasion in which he would not allow one of his dramas to be represented because some one else had treated the same subject, he said: "I do not wish to be compared with any one," and to an editor who proposed publishing a selection of his poems, he replied; "You seem to me like a man, who, showing in one hand some stones gathered from Mont Blanc, really think that you can say to people, 'This is Mont Blanc.'" He believes himself to be above all comparison with any cotemporaneous writer; and takes no part in fact in that continuous warfare which moves the writers of France to witty and malicious sayings which scathe without drawing forth a cry, and go the rounds of Paris. He stands on one side, perfectly silent, and on the other hand would not be adapted for this kind of conflict. It is said that this is the case because he is not witty. He has replied

most tartly to the criticism. "To say that a man of genius has no wit, is a great consolation for the many witty men who have no genius." Yet, the criticism is just, perhaps, although we find in his parlimentary speeches admirable examples of repartee to unexpected thrusts. His jokes have frequently the stamp of great genius; but do not provoke the salted and peppered laugh of true French wit. The delicate stiletto of irony flies from his hand like something colossal; he is only capable of giving great blows of the club which crush the helmet and head. And then he holds himself almost above literature. He regards himself almost in the light of a priest of all people, who has survived, by some decree of Providence, a thousand trials and misfortunes in order to watch over humanity. This appears quite clearly in his aprostrophies to the people, in his warnings to monarchs, in the tone of prophecy which he gives to his presentments, in the form of response that he gives to his sentences, in the character of menace that he throws into his reproofs, in all his language broken into haughty affirmations and absolute opinions, as if every one of his propositions were a decree to be engraved on

bronze or marble for future generations. All these things, whether known before or simply heard said, make any stranger who intends visiting him, hesitate for some time before doing so. Certain it is, that after the first hesitation, one indulges in encouraging reflections—thinking, for example, that the feeling which keeps us from presenting ourselves before a proud man whom we admire, is at the bottom, only a feeling of pride. Then one reflects how many miserable writers, wretched and powerless pedants and unknown village scribblers, think no less of themselves than Victor Hugo. And, in fine, we say to ourselves that ours is a presumptious mania, which makes us feel, that put in his place, we should not be elated by the glory of being the first poet in Europe. Then one takes courage. Yet it is a thing that is rather alarming, the idea of presenting ourselves unknown there without any excuse but the impulse of the heart, before a famous man, in the city which fêtes him, in his house amid a crowd of admirers—to tell him * * * * what? "I wished to see you."

V.

Nevertheless, one morning I found myself, almost

unconsciously, in the courtyard of No. 20 Rue de Clichy, opposite the window of the porter's lodge, and heard with a kind of astonishment, as if some one else were speaking, my own voice saying: "Does Victor Hugo live here?" I was perfectly certain that he lived there; yet I was rather surprised to hear the reply:—"Yes, sir, on the second floor," in a most indifferent tone. It seemed to me very strange that the fact of Victor Hugo's living there should be so natural to the porter. Then, suddenly, it struck me as most absurd that I should go to present myself to that man in such a manner, and I said aloud to myself—"You certainly are a fool," remaining quite absorbed for some moments in the contemplation of a cat which was sleeping in a window on the ground floor—and shall I confess it? I felt a slight tremor in my knees as if my breakfast hour had been passed for some time. I know that I recovered myself and began climbing the stairs, but with the firm conviction that as soon as I reached the door I should turn away without ringing the bell. I mounted slowly; on one stair I felt the courage of a lion, on another I was seized with the temptation to turn my back

and run off like a thief. I stopped two or three times to wipe my forehead, moist with perspiration. Oh, never has any Alpine climber made a more fatiguing ascent than that one! I should like to have turned back, but could not. What was the matter? There were five hundred De Amicis, of every size, who filled the stairs behind me, crowded and packed between the wall and the banisters like anchovies, who all said to me in a low voice—Go on! Suddenly, as if up to that time I had been thinking of something quite different, I found myself standing at the foot of the last flight of stairs, opposite the door. Then, I don't know how, all fears vanished. I felt a powerful impulse that was given me by a thousand combined recollections of childhood and youth, my blood rushed to my heart, Cosette murmured: "Courage!"—Hernani said: "Proceed!"—Genaro cried: "Ring!" and I pulled the bell. Ye heavenly powers! It seemed to me as if I could hear the continuous ringing of the great bell of Notre Dame, and I stood there trembling as if that sound were to set all Paris in commotion. Finally, at the same moment I felt the sensation of a dagger in my breast and saw the door open.

I found myself facing a maid—a beautiful woman dressed with taste. In a corner of the anti-chamber two servants were polishing silver candlesticks. Through an open door one could see in another room a half-cleared table, with a newspaper in the centre of it. Insignificant but never-to-be-forgotten trifles! I asked the girl, in a weak tenor voice, if Victor Hugo lived there. She, too, replied, "Yes," with an indifference which greatly astonished me. I then asked if he could receive me; she answered that he was still in his room. I stood there, quite confused, without saying a word; but the woman must have been accustomed to seeing young men present themselves in this way, with a look of embarrassment, at her master's door, and to divining from the face the feeling which excited them, because she gave me a glance half smiling and half pitiful, as much as to say—"Oh, I understand; you are one of the many,"—and then added in a benevolent tone of voice: "I think, however, that he is awake, and can ask him when he will receive you;" so, without giving me time to reply, she disappeared.

It seemed to me as if I were dreaming or intoxicated. The feeling of reality left me entirely. I

asked myself if the Victor Hugo who was in the adjoining room were really that Victor Hugo for whom I was looking, and it did not seem as if it were possible. In fact I could have wished that it were not possible. It struck me that I had done an insensate thing. What have I done? I said to myself. My brain must have become addled. What will happen next? And thinking that it was possible he did not wish to receive me, I felt the blood mounting to my head. Suddenly the maiden reappeared, and said politely: "Monsieur, Victor Hugo will receive you with pleasure this evening at half-past nine o'clock."

Oh adorable creature! I must go back twenty years, when, having waited motionless three hours before a door, for a word which was to give me three months of liberty and pleasure or three months of slavery and humiliation, the secretary of the commission finally appeared, and said to me solemnly, *Promoted!* I must go back to one of those days in order to say that I have felt at another time such a delicious expansion of the lungs, such thorough satisfaction, such a mad desire to go down the staircase five steps at a time,

which thou hast made me experience, with those fourteen blessed words, Oh maid of my soul!

VI.

From half past nine o'clock in the morning until half past nine o'clock at night I was king of France. Oh! Victor Hugo vain, Victor Hugo communist, Victor Hugo demoniacal, Victor Hugo crazy. What nonsense! All these Victor Hugos of criticism, calumny, with fringed cap, or with the horn of satanic pride, had disappeared from my mind. For me there was now but one Victor Hugo, the great amorous and disdainful poet, full of strong counsels and holy consolations—the man who had made me rave with love as a youth; who had made me think and struggle as a man; the poet whose fulminating verses had sounded in my heart on the battle-field like the exciting cry of a distant general; the writer who had a thousand times crushed my miserable pride as a poor scribbler, making me feel an indescribable, bitter, and salutary voluptuousness in humiliation, which quieted my soul; the author, in speaking of whom, the warm and ready phrase which had captivated my sympathies, burst a thou-

sand times from my agitated heart; the artist who had aided me in expressing a thousand different sentiments, and in rendering the image of a thousand things which, without his assistance, would have remained buried forever in my soul; the writer some of whose thoughts or pictures recurred to my memory every moment, illuminating, commenting upon, or giving form to my emotions, when in Spain, Greece, on the Rhine, Bosphorus, or on the ocean; the poet of children, the consoler of disconsolate mothers, the singer of glorious deaths, the great painter of skies and oceans; object of twenty years' study, of curiosity, and subject of discussion; a thousand times abandoned, a thousand times resumed, defended over and over again; galley slave of beautiful loves, patron of ardent friendships, companion of feverish nightwatches, and inciter of outbursts of desperate weeping; the man, in fact, in whom I had lived a great portion of the most beautiful part of my life; who had transfused into my blood his genius, and from whose works I had formed my brains, nerves and bones—this was the Victor Hugo whom I had seen before me, and at every hour that passed it seemed to me as if his figure

grew a foot higher and that my heart became a year younger.

VII.

Yet, here is a problem for the searchers of the human heart. Toward evening, an hour before starting out, suddenly, something like mortal silence took possession of me. I felt myself suddenly quite empty, dry, and cold. It seemed to me that, appearing before Victor Hugo, I should not have felt the slightest shock, nor have found a word to say—and I was astonished at it. For the reason, in fact, that there is but one profound and visible emotion which justifies the audacity of such a visit. When that emotion is lacking, it looks as if one had gone there from curiosity, and mere curiosity, in such cases, is impudence. What causes this sudden speechlessness of the heart? Perchance the heart falls asleep, weary with emotion, in order to regain fresh strength. I do not know, but can only affirm, that it was useless to try and arouse myself and recall to mind all the thoughts and feelings of the morning; every effort was in vain; no matter how hard I struggled I could not succeed in awakening

one spark; and I ascended the staircase with an indifference that astonished me. Am I stupefied? I asked myself, or am I ill? Now, what shall I say? I was devoured by rage, and could have gnawed my fingers and beaten my head. I remember that I was still in this state when the door opened, and I found myself in the anteroom lighted by a lamp hung from the ceiling. This was, fortunately, the last moment. The housekeeper asked my name in order to announce it; the sound of which, as pronounced by me, and repeated by her, in that room, aroused me as if some one had called me; my mind became clear and a flood of life rushed to my heart.

The woman opened a door and disappeared. Through the half-open door came a confused sound of gay and loud voices, from which I could understand that supper was just at an end. Among all those voices I caught the words, *La philosophie Indienne.* I had scarcely time to think—Oh gods! what shall I say if I am attacked on the subject of Indian philosophy? The door closed again. It seemed as if a profound silence followed. The housekeeper was doing her errand.

The moments were like quarters of an hour. That silence was terrible to me. Finally, the woman reappeared, beckoned me to follow her, looking at me curiously as if my face had something strange in it; led me through a hallway, quietly pushed open a folding-door and said in a low voice: "Enter, Monsieur—Monsieur Victor Hugo is there!" I stood for a moment motionless. I felt far from well. If the maid had looked me in the face she would have offered me a glass of water.

"Courage!" I said to myself, as I raised the curtain, and taking a step forward, found myself face to face with Victor Hugo.

He was standing alone and motionless.

What should I say to him? At eighteen, on such occasions, one sheds tears. Weeping is the grand and lovely eloquence of early youth. But at thirty one no longer weeps. At thirty one conquers emotion without stifling it, and speaks. The enthusiasm overflows, proud of itself, in burning and manly words, the forehead is raised, the eye gleams, the voice vibrates, and the soul expands. Of what I said I have no idea. Some one whispered rapidly in my ears, impulsive words, which I repeated in a

trembling and sonorous voice, experiencing a tremendous sweetness in my heart, and seeing before me, confusedly, a white head that seemed enormous, and two eyes fastened upon mine, which assumed little by little an expression of curiosity and benevolence. Suddenly I stopped, as if a hand had seized me by the throat—and I was breathless.

Then my admiration of twenty years, the constancy of my ardent desire, my inquietude in days past, my trepidation all that day, my childish terror, my youthful nightwatches, fevers as a man, and my humiliation as a writer had their great recompense.

The hand that wrote *Nôtre Dame* and *La Légende des Siécles* grasped my own.

And instantly thereafter I experienced a second feeling sweeter perhaps than the first.

The left hand of the great poet joined the right one, and my hand, warm and trembling, rested for some moments between his.

A brief silence followed, during which I heard the sound of my breathing, as if I had run a race. Then I heard his voice: a grave but sweet voice, in which I seemed to hear a thousand voices, and which astonished me, as if in hearing it, I saw

Victor Hugo appear before me a second time.

"Welcome to my house, Monsieur," he said. "You have heart. You are a friend, and have done well in coming to present yourself in this way. I thank you with all my heart. You will not leave me immediately—will you? You will remain with me the whole evening—will you not?" Then he asked, "From what country are you?"

Hearing that I was Italian, he looked at me fixedly, then took my hand again, made me sit down, seating himself also.

What could one say to him?—Great heavens!—To such a man, when you have expressed with all your soul what you feel for him, standing there, in the first impulse of enthusiasm, you have told him everything. Nothing remains but to ask him questions. Yet what can you make him say that he has not already written? You have known for years all his most secret thoughts; every question seems an idle one, and then, when one has scarcely courage enough to reply, one cannot assuredly have sufficient to interrogate. So I remained silent. On the other hand, what could he say to me—he? Nevertheless, in order to relieve my embarrassment, he asked me

several questions about my impressions of Paris, the Exposition, Italy,—questions which, instead of putting me at my ease, would have disconcerted me more than ever if I had not discovered that, like a clever observer of mankind, he was noticing far more the lively emotion that was displayed in my uncertain voice, monosyllabic replies, and fixed glance that devoured him, than the sense of what I was saying to him. He looked at me with a certain air of affection, raising his eyebrows, half closing his eyes to increase the power of his glance, and smiling slightly, as if he were pleased with the effect he was producing upon me, and were saying to me in his heart: "Look at me, satisfy your desire, poor fellow, because I read it in your face and you seem to me like a good and sincere sort of creature!"

And I did observe him, in fact, in those few moments; but I could not see him well until later, because the light was not falling upon his face.

He is of medium height, slightly bent, and strong-limbed, has a large but well-formed head, immense forehead, a bull-shaped neck, broad shoulders, short, fat hands, and a reddish skin which shows good health and strength. His whole person has some-

thing powerful and athletic about it, like his genius. He has thick and bristling hair, full, short beard, all very white, the eyes are long and narrow, a little oblique like those of a fawn—which gives to his face a rather strange expression. Whether they be blue or black, I do not remember. They are most bright and mobile eyes, which seem half closed, and appear like two gleaming points, that, when they fasten themselves upon you, penetrate to the depths of your soul. He wore an Orleans jacket of black, and his customary dark waistcoat buttoned up to his chin. The impression he produced upon me was of a man who is habitually sad.

"Now, we will remain a little while together," he said to me, after having asked some other questions, "and then you shall go with me into the drawing-room, where you will meet some of the most noted men of France. What city do you reside in in Italy?" I gave my answer hurriedly, and at the same moment was seized by a great fear lest he should ask my profession—and I felt myself grow crimson to the roots of my hair.

Fortunately for me, while he was opening his mouth to question me some people entered. Then

I witnessed a scene, or rather a series of scenes, half pleasing, half touching, which gave me an idea of what Victor Hugo's day must be, and compensated me for not having been able to continue our tête-à-tête. A gentleman advanced, and after him, at short intervals, many others, of different ages, who saw Victor Hugo for the first time, and had asked by letter that same day, as far as I could judge, for the interview. One came to ask permission to reprint one of his poems; another to beg an explanation about the alteration of a scene in a drama; a third, to demand the permission of dedicating a work to him; a fourth, a young Belgian, with a long scar across his face, found himself just in my position, and came, full of emotion, for no other purpose than that of seeing Victor Hugo. I do not remember the others. Well, I had the satisfaction of noticing that, young and old, Frenchmen and foreigners, presented themselves in nearly the same state in which I found myself at the moment of crossing the sill. All their faces expressed a lively emotion, and all, more or less, uttered their words with much difficulty. I admired greatly the gentleness of Victor Hugo's manners. He went forward to meet every-

one, extending his hand in the most cordial and simple manner, but, naturally, could not remember the name of anyone. He feigned, however, to do so. "I remember very well," he said, "without doubt." "You are very amiable, Monsieur." He made them all seat themselves and listened to one after the other of those confused and stammering speeches, giving assent from time to time by a motion of his head. I never saw him smile. He seemed tired. "But certainly," he said at last, "you shall have what you desire." "Can I be of any service to you in anything else?" he said, speaking to the one who had come about changing the scene. This surprised me. It was, if I am not mistaken, about a scene in *Le Roi S'Amuse*. He remembered it line by line, and recited quickly at least ten of them in order to recall one which had at first escaped him. His prodigious memory reveals itself in the immense richness of his language and the innumerable quotations in his works. At last the timid young Belgian came forward, twisting with both hands the rim of his high hat, and said in a voice full of emotion, fixing two moist blue eyes upon Victor Hugo: "Monsieur! I came to Paris to

see you. I am from Bruges. I did not have the courage to present myself before, so my father wrote: 'Go, Victor Hugo is great and good, and he will not refuse to receive thee.' Then I wrote you. I thank you. I would have been content to see you pass in the street. I owe you one of the most beautiful days in my whole life, Monsieur!" He said these few words with a simplicity and grace that are indescribable. Victor Hugo made some sort of a reply—I do not know what—placing his hand affectionately upon the shoulder of the young fellow, whose face was beaming. All the others, standing by, were silent. Then Victor Hugo looked at us all, one after the other; all kept their eyes fastened upon him, no one breathed. He seemed a trifle embarrassed and smiled; and it was for a few moments a silent scene, but full of life and poetry, the memory of which I shall always retain, and I shall feel its beauty forever. After this several present took their leave, and Victor Hugo made the others go into the neighboring salon, pressing the hands of each one as they passed before him.

This second drawing-room was full of people, for the greater part friends of the house. It was a salon

of medium size, rather low, papered in red, and elegantly furnished, but without ostentation. On one side were four sofas placed in a semi-circle, a little way apart, around a marble chimney place; on the mantel-piece there was a mirror, but no pictures adorned the walls. The house, taking everything into consideration, did not strike me as being that of a millionaire poet. There was, however, in the decoration a predominance of dark red and blood-red which harmonized with the genius of its master.

The people scattered through the room formed quite a curious picture. The first one who attracted me, from the strange contrast he formed to the other figures in the picture, (like certain queer words in a beautiful page of Hugo) was a mulatto of colossal stature, in dress-coat and white cravat, who was turning the leaves of an album. I beg his pardon, but I must tell the truth, which is, that at first sight I thought of that *Homère-Hogu, négre*, who stands out so picturesquely in the list of names of the band of *Patron-Minette*, in the *Miserables*. I was afterwards told that he was a collaborator of the *Petite Presse*, full of talent and

very much esteemed. In a corner there was a group of young men who were busily talking together and gaily laughing, with handsome foreheads, bright eyes, poetic styles of wearing the hair in the posed attitudes of correct actors, from which I argued that they were the so-called *Parnassiens*, poets of art for art, or rather of verses for verses, who have for their leader De Lisle, and form a band of pages in the court of Victor Hugo. Then a poet of that family —Catullus Mendes—whose sympathetic and expressive face, with long hair *à la Nazarene* was pointed out to me. On another side was a circle of mature men, almost all tall, among whom were several beautiful gray heads, with striking profiles, in which I seemed to recognize that particular imprint of austerity and sadness which the diversities of political life appear to leave, and which reminds one of the meditative pride of old sea-captains. There were only two ladies, seated near the fireplace, one who has escaped entirely from my memory, and another who impressed me particularly: a woman strongly built, with very white hair, large, open face, lighted by two deep eyes; taciturn—one of Velasquez ladies without the ruff. It was Madamoiselle

Drouet, the powerful actress, who represented *Lucrezia Borgia* for the first time, in 1833, at the theatre of Porte Saint-Martin, where, as every one knows, that terrible drama, written in six weeks, had a most marvellous success. There were other personages, who seemed to be strangers, and who had that air of embarrassment peculiar to those who find themselves for the first time in an illustrious house.

Almost all were talking, but when Victor Hugo entered every one was silent.

He seated himself near the fireplace, on a sofa, and the others formed a great semi-circle around him.

Then I could see and hear him well.

By some means, I do not know how, the conversation fell on the literary congress. Victor Hugo, on being questioned, gave some of the ideas which he intended introducing into his inaugural address. Then, I saw to my surprise, that what I had heard about his mode of talking in private was quite true. I expected to hear the antitheses, great metaphors, the paradoxical and witty form and the imperative intonation which are found in his writings, especially those of these latter years. But there was nothing

of the kind, and it is difficult to imagine simpler language, more modest tones, a more natural manner of putting forth one's opinion than that which he used in that conversation. In order to escape the air of speaking *ex Cathedra*, he talked in a low voice, looking into one face only: "Here is what I should say," he observed; "what I think I shall be able to say; tell me if you think it to the point." He did not gesticulate at all, but held his hands on his knees. Only from time to time he would rub his forehead with one finger, a movement quite natural to him. It is said that also in discussing literature, in most restricted circles and touching the most important questions, he talks with the same simplicity. From which we must naturally conclude that, when writing, in the exaltation of his imagination his nature almost changes, or that he purposely speaks that other language because he thinks it more elevated and more efficacious.

While he was talking all listened most attentively. I was struck by the tone, more than respectful, almost timid, in fact, with which he was addressed even by those who seemed his familiars. No one asked him a question without saying: "*Mon Maitre*,"—"*Mon cher*

Maitre." One said: "*Grand Maitre.*" I never before saw any celebrated writer surrounded by a circle of admirers, which resembled, as that one did, the court of a monarch. It is my duty to add, however, that I never saw upon his face even one look that expressed a vain complacency in the admiration which surrounded him. It is true, on the other hand, that he has been accustomed to it for fifty years.

A great light shone fully on his face, and I could not look at him enough, so strange it seemed to me.

Victor Hugo's face is one that puzzles me. It has two physiognomies. When it is serious, it is very serious—almost gloomy; and seems not only like a face that has never laughed, but one that cannot do so,—and his eyes look at people with an expression of inquietude. One feels like saying to him: "Hugo, do me the favor to look the other way!" They are the eyes of a stern judge, or of a duellist stronger than you, who wishes to fascinate you by his glance. At such moments put on him, in thought, a white turban: he becomes an old sheik—replace this with a helmet: he is an old soldier—place on his head a crown, and he is a vindictive and inexorable king. He has something of

the austerity of a priest, and the gloom of a magician. He has a lion-like face. When he opens his mouth, it seems as if a roar must be heard, and when he raises his strong fist, it seems as if he could not let it down without crushing something. At such times one can read on his face the history of all his struggles, sufferings, the iron-like tenacity of his nature, the gloomy sympathies of his fancy, his convicts, coffins, spectres, rages, and hatreds ; all the *Ombre*, or as he would say, the *dark side* of his works. But suddenly, as I happened to see that evening, while some one was telling a funny anecdote of one of the cabmen of Paris, he burst out into a laugh so fresh and gay, showing all his superb white teeth, and in that laugh his eyes and mouth assumed such a youthful and ingenuous expression, that one could no longer recognize the original man, and was quite as astonished as if a mask had fallen from his face and presented to his view the true Victor Hugo for the first time. At these moments you see, as through a crevice, behind him, Déruchette, Guillormand, Mademoiselle Lise, Don Cæsar de Bazan, Gavroche, his angels, his *ciel bleu*, and all his soft and luminous world. Yet these are only rare

flashes on his face, as in his books, after which it resumes its usual gloomy, pensive expression, as if he were meditating the catastrophe of one of his sanguinary dramas. The more you look at him, the less you can believe that he is that same Hugo of a half century ago, thin, pale and gentle, to whom the publishers and directors of the theatre, who went to see the author of *Hernani*, at his own home, said, "Please do us the favor of calling your father."

While Victor Hugo was talking in a low voice with one of his neighbors, I began a conversation with a gentleman near me—a man in the fifties, having a handsome and artistic physiognomy—who, after a few words, said to me that he was a friend of Victor Hugo's, and that he sometimes wrote letters in his name.

Among other things I spoke to him of the emotion I had felt that morning in mounting the staircase.

"But why?" he asked, pleasantly. Victor Hugo is so amiable, affable with all! He has the heart of a girl and the ways of a child. All that is bitter and terrible in his books has issued from his great imagination, and not from his heart.

Do you not see the sweetness in his face? Look at him!"

I did so; but just at that moment it was so dark and frowning that I would not have dared meet his eye.

"It is true," I replied.

Then he spoke to me of his habits.

'He has the simplest habits in the world," he said. "Have you never met him on the roof of the omnibus of Rue Clichy? From time to time he makes the rounds of Paris in the omnibus that passes through his street, particularly when he is obliged to write. Finding himself thus in the midst of the people, seeing again so many places full of memories for him, contemplating Paris on the wing, from the height, in the fresh air of the morning, inspires him."

At that moment, I caught one of Victor Hugo's phrases, which impressed me. "*L'academie*," he said; "*qui est pleine de bonté pour moi,;*" and I remembered I had heard that, on receiving him at the Academy (I do not know on what occasion), all the academicians, (a very rare thing,) rose to their feet.

My neighbor continued:

"He works every day, is always working. From the morning, when he rises, until four o'clock in the afternoon, he is at his table. His brain is always in activity. Creation for him is a necessity,—and even when he does not feel inspired, he works, as he says, "*to keep his hand in.*" The day is not sufficiently long to enable him to put on paper all that fills his head and heart. But the good Lord will give him a long life and he will give us twenty volumes more."

On hearing these words I could not refrain from gazing at that marvellous old man as I would at a creature from another world, and from thinking that he was working, at that age, with a vigor I had never possessed, and that he worked in this way twenty-five years before I was born.—I was annihilated.

Meanwhile, Victor Hugo was talking of the many little occupations that often carried off his day almost before he was aware of it, and he said good-humoredly, but in a tired tone:

"*Je n'ai pas une minute à moi, vous le voyez bien.*"

And all replied in one voice: "It is true!"

Then one after another began relating jokes, for

the express purpose of amusing him, I suppose ; but they rarely succeeded in doing so.

From time to time his eye wandered around, and fastened itself upon the young Belgian and upon me, as if he were only aware, at that moment, of our presence, and in order to remove this suspicion from our minds he would smile quickly and benevolently, as much as to say : "I do not forget you." Then his habitual sadness would descend upon his face like a visor.

Meanwhile, I was waiting for the opportunity to say something to him. Ah ! then I did not lack for something to say. Courage had come to me, and a thousand questions crowded into my mind. I would have given a year of my life to be alone with him for an hour, to seize him by the hand and to say boldly to him, looking him full in the face : "To tell the truth, Hugo, I want to read thee thoroughly. What dost thou feel in thy blood when thou writest? What dost thou see around thee in the air? What voices dost thou hear speaking in thine ear when thou art creating? What doest thou in thy room when one of those grand ideas, which make the tour of the world, gleam in thy brain, and

when one of those verses that strike the heart like blow of a dagger or the cry of an angel falls from thy pen? Where hast thou known thy *Rose* of the *Vieille Chanson du Printemps*, which made me sigh for a year? From whence came that frightful Mazeppa, whose flight I continually see? Where didst thou find Quasimodo? Reveal to me, then, one of thy thousand secrets. Speak to me of Fatima, of the *Petit Roi de Galice;* tell me something of the Marquis of Lantenac. Explain to me how the spectre which inspired thee with that pitiless shower of blood on the head of the parricide Kanut, or that horrible eye of fire which followed Cain, appeared to thee. Tell me in what part of the inferno didst thou discover the love of the priest Claude, and in what portion of heaven hast thou seen the white face of Dea! Talk to me of thy infancy, the first recollections of thy genius, of the time when Chateaubriand called thee a sublime child; tell me of thy stormy night-watches, if thou criest when the images which startle one appear to thee; tell me if thou weepest when writing the words that draw forth sobs; describe to me thy tortures, intoxications, thy furies; tell me what thou thinkest and

what thou art, mysterious and tremendous old man!"

And thinking over these things, I began searching for some significant phrase with which to begin the conversation, in case the occasion should present itself.

Fortune favored me. Victor Hugo left the room for a moment, then returned to the fireplace and seated himself beside me. The general conversation had broken into many individual ones. No moment could have been more opportune. A hundred interrogations rushed to the end of my tongue, and I commenced boldly: "Monsieur?"

Victor Hugo turned courteously, placed one hand on my knee, and looked at me attentively.

What could you expect? There are misfortunes which might happen to all. Do you remember the lettered tailor of the *Promessi Sposi*, who, after having studied a thousand charming things to say to the Cardinal which would do him honor, could think of nothing else to say when the moment arrived than "Just imagine!" which ruined him for life? Well, I regret to say, and tell it in order to punish myself I cut the same figure as that tailor; in fact,

rather a sadder one. The fixed gaze of Victor Hugo confused me, all my beautiful ideas took flight, and I had nothing to say but this * *

Well, I must confess it—

I asked him if he had been to see the Exposition!

And I was overwhelmed by my question. I no longer remember what Victor Hugo replied. I only recollect that, some moments after, in speaking of the Exposition, he said: "*C'est un beau jou-jou.*"

"*Mais c'est immense, savez vous, mon maitre,*" some one remarked.

And he replied smilingly, "*C'est un immense jou-jou.*"

The words really seemed to come from the dark depths of my humiliation, and I did not dare open my mouth again. Victor Hugo, after a short time, changed his place, the separate conversations became general, and my opportunity was lost. Victor Hugo began talking again, and I, half closing my eyes and looking up toward the ceiling, in order to be alone with my thoughts, began going over the emotions for which I was indebted to that man, accompanying my meditations with the sweet and solemn sound of his voice. I thought of the

times I had secretly read *Nôtre Dame* behind the school benches, of the time I had kissed the volume of the *Contemplations* under an arbor of jessamines in the garden of my paternal home; of the verses which I used to declaim under my tent at night in the midst of the silence of the encampment; of the heart-beats that I experienced the first time a lithograph of him fell under my eyes; of the immense distance that I felt between him and my desire to know him in the little provincial city where I had read his first book; of a day when, still a boy, I had made my father laugh by asking him, "If Victor Hugo should suddenly appear while we were at table, what would you do?" And all these distant recollections evoked there, near by him, filled me with emotions, and I said to myself, "Now I have met him, know him, am in his own house; the voice to which I listen is his; he is here only a step away. Is it really true?" and opening my eyes, I exclaimed: "Here he is, my dear and terrible Victor Hugo. By Heavens, it is not an empty dream!"

While I was abandoning myself to these thoughts I suddenly heard every one rising and taking their leave. I, too, approached Victor Hugo, took his

right hand in both of mine, and was unable to utter a single word.

But he looked at me and comprehended all. Then he said, as he pressed my hand and gave me a smiling but rather sorrowful look:

"Adieu, dear sir."

Then added: "Not adieu; *au revoir*, is it not?"

I do not know, but I believe I was foolish enough to reply, "*Au revoir.*"

I left the room much moved and happy, with a slight feeling of melancholy, and so bewildered that I stumbled against a chair in making my exit.

VIII.

This is the impression Victor Hugo made upon me in his own house. But I should not have seen him thoroughly had I not seen him in public, upon one of those occasions, on which, whatever they may be, his presence is the spectacle looked forward to with the most curiosity. I saw him in the theatre of the *Châtelet*, when he, as president, delivered his address, at the inauguration of the Literary Congress. An hour before he appeared, the theatre was densely crowded. The parquet well filled with

writers and artists of every country, among whom were exchanged looks of curiosity, signs and interrogations, each knowing in that assemblage many names and few faces, and all being desirous on that fine occasion of recognizing all their own acquaintances. There was a general movement of old heads and young ones, of beautiful eyes full of thought, of faces that approached each other and smiled, of black heads that bowed before white ones, of hands that sought and pressed each other; one heard all languages spoken, and a thrill of life that gladdened all ran along on every side. Upon the immense and brilliantly lighted stage were the delegates of all nations, from Sweden to Italy, and from the Republic of San Salvador to Russia. A great staff of poets, novelists, savants, statesmen, publicists, and publishers, among whom were seen the fair and smiling face of Turgénieff, the beautiful, bold head of Edmond About, and the sympathetic countenance of Jules Simon, the target for many glances. Yet the great curiosity was to see Victor Hugo. There were hundreds of strangers who had never seen him, his name was upon all lips, and every eye was turned toward that portion of the stage

at which he was to appear. At every movement among the scenes, there followed a great bustle throughout the theatre. It was a beautiful and consoling sight to witness the intense curiosity in that large multitude so varied in character and blood, and to think that he who aroused it was an old poet. Suddenly, all the delegates rose to their feet; among all those gray and white heads appeared one that was whiter than all the rest, and a tremendous burst of applause broke out—one of those outbursts which should wake in him who receives it, a feeling almost of terror, and which, resounding in the soul of him who applauds, increases the sentiment to which he has given expression. It was one tremendous, tempestuous, unending applause, that made the theatre tremble. Across Victor Hugo's face passed one flash of light, one flash only, but it revealed his whole soul. Instantly thereafter his countenance resumed its habitual expression of gravity. He approached the front of the stage with uncertain step, surrounded by his illustrious cortege, stood at one side of a table, and began reading his address, written in enormous characters upon immense sheets of paper. It was not one of his hap-

piest efforts, but this is not the place to criticise it. He read slowly, in a loud voice, enunciating distinctly every phrase, word and syllable. His voice is still vigorous and sonorous, although in long sentences it grew a trifle weak, and at times he uttered sharp, shrill sounds. There were stupendous moments when he said: "You are the ambassadors of the Human Mind, in this great Paris. You are welcome; France salutes you!" He said these last words in a tone full of nobility and with a broad, sweeping gesture that touched the assemblage. When he said: "*Hommes du passé, prenez-en vôtre parti, nous ne vous craignons pas!*" and saying this he shook and raised his powerful head like a lion, and fixed his fulminating eyes on the end of the hall with a defiant and menacing look; remaining some moments immovable, his face suffused, in the midst of a profound silence; he was really beautiful and terrible, like a Canto of his *Châtiments*, and a shudder ran through the parquet. Then his address, up to that point so full of deep rage, softened at the subject of amnesty, and then the tone of his voice changed and seemed like that of another, and those noble words: "All festivals

are fraternal; a festival is not a festival if we do not forgive some one," which he uttered with an inexpressibly gentle accent of pity and prayer that sent through the crowd a thrill of consent, more eloquent, a hundred times, than mere applause. And finally, reading this sentence: "There is a thing greater than any triumph, and it is the spectacle of the country which opens its arms, and the banished man who appears upon the horizon! He gave emphasis to this thought by a solemn motion of the hand, and with a sweet, sad look that called forth a storm of applause and cries. He was followed by other speakers, who ended their speeches with a reverent salute to the great master, but he gave no sign of emotion. Only from time to time his face would brighten, but instantly become clouded again, as if the obstinate and implacable thought which had left him a moment before had once more taken possession of him.

When the last address was finished, he rose and began to move away. Then burst out a final applause, heartier, noisier and more persistent than at first, accompanied by shouts of enthusiasm, which compelled him to stop. It was not an ap-

plause for the address; it was applause for the *Orientales* and the *Legende;* it was a tribute of gratitude to the poet of great affections, a salute to the old wrestler, a good wish to the septuagenarian, and a farewell to the man whom many would never see again. He replied by one long look, then disappeared.

IX.

Such is Victor Hugo as I saw him at the height of his glory. Will the future generations see him at the same height? The majority doubt it. But time can do no more than bury him; his colossal frame will remain as erect as an enormous leafless tree on the horizon of the literary history of the century, and legions of geniuses will fly with the feathers which have fallen from his wings. He is one of the powerful writers who present themselves to posterity, bleeding, dishevelled and breathless, bearing on their own coat-of-arms the titles of their works like the names of battles won, of glorious disasters or sublime follies, and posterity salutes them with reverence, as it would do wounded athletes. He will certainly be admired as one of the

strongest literary phenomena of his time, and one of the most marvellous examples of the strength and boldness of human genius. "*Il est bon*," as he himself would say, "*que l'on trouve sur les sommets ces grands examples d'audace.*" He has shown the height to which genius can climb, and has illuminated the precipices in which genius meets with ruin. He has made millions of human beings think and feel for half a century. If nothing else remained of him, his immense popularity among all people, like a consoling example of the echo which the words of a man (who has no other strength than words) may find in humanity, would still remain. But he will stand safe and proud on the solitary summit, and the more the literature of his country and of all Europe shall sink into scepticism, sensuality and decay, the higher and more noble will his figure appear in the distance. The day of the great worker is not yet at an end. It seems as if he were passing through some sad period at present. God grant that he may emerge from it, and that we may still hear for many years to come his powerful voice which moved our fathers in their youth. It will say something grand and true to us up to the last moment

We have heard it as children; we wish to hear it again "when the tree shall give back to earth its withered leaves." We express to him this hope: That the great poet, who sprang up with the dawn of the nineteenth century, may accompany the century to its end; that his genius may shine as long as his heart shall beat, and that Europe may gather together with the last breath of his centennial life the last canto of his immortal *épopée*.

IV.

EMILE ZOLA.

I.

Once in a railway carriage, I saw a Frenchman who was reading a book very attentively, show, from time to time signs of surprise. Suddenly, while I was trying to discover the title on the cover, he exclaimed: "Oh! that's disgusting!" and put the volume into his valise in the most contemptuous manner. He remained for some moments lost in thought, then reopened the valise, took up the book again and began reading. He may have finished a couple of pages, when he suddenly burst out into a hearty laugh, and turning to his companion, said: "Ah! my dear friend, here is the most marvellous description of a wedding dinner!" Then continued his reading, showing plainly that he was enjoying it intensely. The book was *l'Assommoir*, and that which happened to the Frenchman in perusing

it occurs to all who take up for the first time the novels of Zola. You must conquer the first feeling of repugnance; then, whatever be the final judgment pronounced upon the writer, you are glad you have read his works, and you arrive at the conclusion that you ought to have done so. The first effect produced, particularly after the perusal of other works, is like that of one coming out of a close and heated theatre, who feels the first whiff of fresh air in his face with a keen sense of pleasure, even if it bring with it an odor not altogether agreeable. After reading his romances it seems as if in all others, even in the truest, there were a veil between the reader and the things, and that there exists to our minds the same difference as between the representations of human faces on canvass and the reflections of the same faces in a mirror. It is like finding truth for the first time. Certain it is, that no matter how strong you are, or whether you have *le nez solide*, like *Gervaise* at the hospital, some times you spring back as if from a sudden whiff of foul air. But even at these points, as at almost every page, though in the act of protesting violently "This is too much!"—there is a devil in us which

laughs and frolics and enjoys itself hugely at our discomfiture. You feel the same pleasure that you would have in hearing a very blunt man talk, even if he were brutal; a man who expresses, as Othello says, his worst ideas in his worst language, who describes what he sees, repeats what he hears, says what he thinks, and tells what he is, without any regard for any one's feelings, and just as if he were talking to himself—*à la bonne heure!* From the very first lines you know with whom you are dealing. The delicate persons retire—that is an understood matter; he does not conceal or embellish anything, either sentiments, thoughts, conversations, acts, or places. He will be a judicious romancer, surgeon, casuist, physiologist, and an expert chancellor of the exchequer, who will raise every veil, putting his hands into every thing and calling everything coolly by its name, not heeding, but rather being greatly surprised at your astonishment. In the moral order, he unveils in his characters *those* deepest feelings, which are generally profound secrets, and are tremblingly whispered through the window of the confessional. In the material order, he makes us perceive every odor, every flavor and every contact.

In language, he scarcely refrains from those few unpronounceable words, which wicked boys stealthily seek in the dictionary. No one has ever gone further in this extreme, and you really do not know whether you ought to admire most his talent or his courage. Among the myriads of characters in novels whom we remember, his remain crowded on one side, and are the largest and most tangible of all. We have not only seen them pass and heard them talk, but have jostled against them, felt their breath and perceived the odor of their flesh and garments. We have seen the blood circulating under their skins; know in what positions they sleep, what they eat, how they dress and undress; we understand the difference between their temperaments and ours, the most secret appetites, the most passionate anger of their language; their gestures, grimaces, the spots on their linen, the dirt in their nails, etc. And, like the characters, he imprints upon our minds the places, because he looks at everything with the keen glance, which embraces all, and which nothing escapes. In a room already drawn and painted, the light is moved, and he interrupts the story to tell us where it glides, upon what it breaks in the new direction, the ray

of the flame, and how the legs of a chair and the hinges of a door gleam in a dark corner. From the description of a shop, he makes us understand that it has just struck twelve, or lacks nearly an hour of sunset. He notes all the shadows, all the spots on the sun; all the shades of color which succeed each other from hour to hour upon the wall, and presents everything with such a marvellous distinctness that five years after reading, we remember the appearance the upholstery presented about five o'clock in the evening when the curtains had been drawn, and the effect the appearance produced upon the mind of a person who was seated in the corner of that particular room. He never forgets anything, and gives life to everything, and there is nothing before which his omnipotent pencil stops, neither soiled linen, the appearance of drunken men, dirty flesh, or decayed bodies. He makes us leave the perfumed boudoir of *Renée* with a headache, and remain for an hour at a workman's shop, in the society of the pretty *Elise*, among pigs' heads buried in jelly, boxes of sardines floating in oil, blood-red hams, larded veal, and patties of hares' liver, depicted, or rather presented, in such a natural manner

that when you have finished reading you leave the book and go involuntarily in search of water to wash your hands. So also, the perfume about *Nanna's* shoulders, the odor of fish in the clothes of the beautiful Normandese, the smell of *Boit sans Soif's* breath, and the mouldy odor of *Lantier's* trunk; he makes us perceive everything, by opening our nostrils with the holder of his pen; and describes the Park of Paradou, flower by flower, the market of St. Eustace, fish by fish, the shop of *Madame Lecœur*, cheese by cheese, and the dinner of *Gervaise*, mouthful by mouthful. In the same manner he proceeds in regard to the occupations of his characters in which we take part, explaining them most minutely, no matter what may be their nature, so that one learns from his novels, as from a receipt-book, the practices of arts and modes; how to iron shirts, do the work of an ironmonger, carve chickens, perform Mass and lead a square dance.

Among all these things, in all these places, the air of which we breathe, and in which we see and touch everything, moves a varied crowd of women, corrupt to the marrow, foul-mouthed shop-keepers, cunning bankers, knavish priests, prostitutes, dan-

dies, ruffians and filth of every kind and shape, (among which appears sometimes, like a *rara avis*, a good man), and between them all they do a little of everything, from the crime of incest, (circulating between the penal code and the hospital, and the pawn shops and tavern), through all the passions and brutish tastes, sunk in the mire up to the chin, in a thick and heavy atmosphere, hardly freshened from time to time by the breath of a lovely affection, and stirred alternately by plebian sickness and the heartrendering cries of the famished and dying. Yet despite this, he is a moral writer, one can affirm this resolutely—Emile Zola is one of the most moral novelists of France, and it is really astonishing that any one can doubt this. He makes us perceive the smell of vice, not the perfume; his nude figures are those of the anatomical table, which do not inspire the slightest immoral thought; there is not one of his books, not even the crudest, that does not leave in the soul pure, firm, and immutable, the aversion or scorn for the base passions of which he treats. He is not, like Dumas *fils*, bound by an inconquerable sympathy to his hideous women, to whom he says "Infamous creatures!" in a loud

voice, and "Dear ones!" just above his breath. Brutally, pitilessly, and without hypocrisy he exposes vice, nude, and holds it up to ridicule, standing so far off from it that he does not graze it with his garments. Forced by his hand, it is Vice itself that says "Detest me and pass by!" His novels, he himself says, are really "moral in action." The scandal which comes from them is only for the eyes and ears. And as he holds back, as a man, from the mire mixed by his pen, so completely does he, as a writer, keep aloof from the characters which he has created.

There is, perhaps, no other modern author who conceals himself more skilfully in his works. After reading all his novels one can not understand who or what he is. He is a profound observer, a powerful painter, and a wonderful writer. Strong, without respect for mankind, brusque, resolute, bold, rather ill-humored, and little given to benevolence, but you know nothing more of him. Only that, although you do not see his entire face through the pages of his books, you catch a glimpse, however, of his forehead stamped by a straight and deep furrow, and you fancy that he must have seen, at no great dis-

tance, a large portion of the misery and vice which he describes. And he seems a man, who, having been offended by the world, revenges himself by tearing from her her mask and showing her for the first time as she really is—for the most part odious and disgusting. A thorough conviction guides and strengthens him; that he ought to speak and describe the truth at any risk or any cost, just as it is, boldly, entirely, and without any concealment. He also has, as victor Hugo says of Shakespeare, "*une sorte de parti pris gigantesque*," To this part that he has taken he consequently adapts his art, which becomes rather a reproduction than a creation, and is, in fact, a quiet, patient, methodical art, not sending out great flashes but illuminating every thing with an equal light on all sides. He is courageous but circumspect in his efforts; always sure of his facts; rises little, but never falls, and proceeds with a slow step, but in a direct road toward a goal which he sees clearly before him. His novels are hardly romances. They have no framework nor scarcely a vertebral column. Try to relate one; it is impossible. They are composed of an immense number of details, which generally escape you after the persual,

like the thousand little pictures without any subject in a Dutch Museum; and for this reason you re-read them with pleasure. You expect some great fact from page to page; it flies before you, but you never overtake it. You are never struck by any great attempt at effect, interest, or character, which keeps your mind in suspense, and on which a novel generally depends. There are no high points, from which you overlook an enormous space; it is a continuous plain on which you walk with bowed head, deviating from your course every moment, and stopping at each step to look at stones, insects, foot tracks or the weeds. His characters scarcely act, and the greater portion of them are not necessary to whatever action is developed in the novel. They are not people who play the comedy; but those intent upon their own affairs, taken suddenly by a photographer, without being aware of it. In every novel there are some months or years in the life of every one. You see each one living on his own account, and each one interests you principally for himself, little or not at all for the part he takes in the affairs of the others. From this arises the great power of Zola. No matter how defective his novel be in construc-

tion, it makes up for it in truth. You do not see therein the hand of the novelist who chooses the facts, arranges them in order to connect them, and conceals them behind each other intending to surprise us, and who prepares a great effect with a thousand little sacrifices to probability and reason. The narration goes on of itself, so that no other way seems possible, and it appears to be a simple explanation of truth, not only as regards the characters, but also the nature of the facts and the order in which they are presented. You read, and seem to be standing at a window, watching a thousand little incidents of street life. For this reason almost all the novelists, when compared with him, give rather the appearance of dice players. And not having the habit common to all writers of romance, of knotting and unknotting many threads and drawing them from different points to a common centre, he is free to bestow all his attention on the real end, which is to represent truth, and is thus enabled to attain by this means, a very high degree of power.

He has not, on the other hand, very varied faculties, and feels this, and so sharpens and strengthens admirably all those he possesses to supply the lack

of others. And it is doubtful whether this defect is really to be deplored, as perhaps a more vivid imagination might have diminished his strength on another side, taking away a portion of his power of description and analysis. Gifted on the contrary, as he is, he conceives a novel in such a way that his conception and aim do not interfere in the slightest degree with the freedom of his work; interested in a scene or dialogue he buries himself in it, and works with all his might, having forgotten apparently all about the novel. The dialogue proceeds without any aim, the scene develops without any restraint; for this reason both are perfectly natural. Sometimes he gathers, in flying along, a thousand nothings; the cart which is passing, the cloud that hides the sun, the wind moving the curtain, the reflection of a looking-glass, a distant noise, and the reader himself at that moment, forgetting everything else, lives with the writer and in that place, experiencing a most pleasing illusion, which leaves nothing to be desired.

With this power of bringing the most trifling thing into bold relief, and working, as he does, methodically and patiently, he becomes insuperable

in the art of gradations, and in the exposition of a series of most delicate transitions, of the slow and complete transformation of a character, or the state or condition of a thing, so that the reader is carried on with him, without being aware of the fact, so slowly that he experiences a feeling of profound surprise when he reaches the end, and discovers, on turning back, that he has gone over a great deal of ground. The power of several of his novels consists almost entirely in this art; for they are, as it were, woven, and are a fine tissue of little episodes formed of broken dialogues and life-like descriptions, in which every word has a color and a flavor, every blow makes its mark and in every instance there is, so to express oneself, the writer himself. It is very rare that you feel a strong or sudden emotion in his novels. The sublime and distressing scene of "*Monsieur, Ecoutez donc,*" of *Gervaise*, when she, dying of hunger, offers herself to the passers by, and again, that where she is eating and weeping under the eyes of *Goujet*, are almost unique in his romances. Nearly always, in reading, you experience a series of pleasurable sensations, of little shocks and surprises which leave the mind uncertain, here a laugh,

there a shudder of repugnance, a little impatience, a sense of astonishment at a description wonderfully life-like, a spasm of the heart for a human sore torn ruthlessly open, and a slight feeling of amazement continuing from the first page to the last, as at the revolution of a series of stereoscopic views of an unknown country. They are novels that emit an odor and flavor in sips, like glasses of liqueur, and which leave the breath strong and the palate insensible to sweets. To this his style contributes largely, so solid and always connected with the thought, so full of ingenious artifices, cunningly concealed under a certain uniform gait, governed by the writer, stupendously imitative of motions and sounds, resolute and harmonious, which seems to be accompanied by the measured blow of an iron hand upon the table, and in which you hear the deep, full breath of a powerful youth. Strength in fact, is the preëminent gift of Zola, and any one wishing to describe him, must say in the first place: He is powerful! Every one of his novels is "*un grand tour de force*," an enormous weight which he raises to and from the ground, doing all that in him lies to conceal the effort. After reading the last page,

one must exclaim, "Ah, what a hand;" like those three sots in the "*L'Assommoir*," about the Marquis, who had thrown three porters to the ground by blows of the head in their stomachs. And the sudden appearance of this novelist in his shirt sleeves, with his hairy chest and rough voice, who in the most impudent manner, and in the open street, says everything to everybody, in the midst of a crowd of novelties in black suits, well educated and smiling, who say a thousand obscene things in a decent form in those little romances, *couleur de rose*, which are written for boudoirs and the stage is in truth an event in literature.

Here is his greatest merit. He has flung into the air with one kick, all the toilet articles of literature, and has washed with a dish cloth of gray linen the bedizened face of Truth. He has written the first popular novel which bears really the "odor of the people," has attacked almost all social classes, lashing until he draws blood, the intense niggardliness of the little provincial cities, the roguery of intrigues in high life, bejewelled corruption, political intrigue, the machinations of ambitious priests, the cruel coldness of shopmen's selfishness, gourman-

dism and sensuality, with such power, that although preceded on this road by other admirable writers, you seem to have entered it for the first time, and those flagellated feel the old wounds opened with a spasm thay have never experienced before. Fulfilling this office, he has been driven perhaps beyond his art; but has opened in art new crevices through which we see fresh horizons, and has taught colors, blows of the chisel, shadings, forms and means of every nature, (from which they can extract an immense advantage) to the thousand other geniuses, although they set out on another road, toward an entirely different goal. And there is no occassion to fear that a gloomy or excessive school will rise from him, because the descriptive faculty, which is his great power, cannot proceed farther on the road on which he travels, nor the worship of naked truth have a more intrepid or faithful priest. His imitators will fall miserably weakened in his footprints, and he will remain alone where he has arrived, at the utmost limits of his art, upright at the edge of a precipice, into which, whoever wishes to pass him at any cost, will fall headforemost. But one cannot pronounce a final judgment upon him now, for he is only

thirty-seven years of age, and is still in the flower of his youth as a writer, and it is possible that he may change while increasing in stature. It is true that the road upon which he has started is so deeply cleft and so steep, that we cannot understand how he is to emerge from it. But it is certain that he will try to do so, and that if he does not succeed in the attempt, we shall witness one of those powerful efforts, and have from him one of those "unsuccessful masterpieces," which cause no less surprise than the great triumphs.

II.

His literary history is one of the most curious of the period. His first works were *Contes à Ninon*, written at twenty-two, and published long thereafter. Even here there is the incipient Zola, with a tear in the eye and a smile on the lips, hardly disturbed by a slight expression of sadness. He does not value these tales at all, and grows angry with the critics, who, either sincerely or maliciously say they prefer them to his romances. To one of these men who expressed this opinion some time ago, he replied: "I thank you, but if you will come to my house I

will show you several of my third-rate compositions which will probably please you more!" His first novels were those four bold ones, (among which was *Thérése Raquin*) now almost forgotten, that were defined by a critic as "putrid literature." In them there was the man Zola, but only from the waist up. His great artistic faculties, already expressed, but not yet certain, felt the need of raising themselves upon hideous subjects, which attracted for themselves general attention. Yet one could see in those romances a most dauntless writer, who had resolved to make way for himself with his elbows—and he had brazen ones. One of these novels, *Madeleine Férat*, (which hinges on an incident witnessed by the author, about a girl, who abandoned by the man she loves, marries another, and has a few years later a son, who resembles the first), suggests to him the idea of writing that series of physiological romances, which he called, *Histoire Naturelle et Sociale d'une famille sous le Second Empire*, and from that first day all this work flashed through his mind, and he traced the genealogical tree that he called *Page d'Amour*.

I thought this also was one of those displays of

"a vast and antique design," with which authors seek to enlarge, in the reading public, the conception of their own works; but the manuscripts I had the honor of seeing, completely disabused my mind of this idea. From the very beginning he produced a list of the principal personages in the Rougon-Macquart family, and destined to each his career, proposing to demonstrate in all, the effects of the origin, education, social class, places, circumstances and epoch. The first romances of this new "cycle" did not have much success. The linguists, the fastidious and all those who taste books with a literary palate, felt the strength, the beauty therein and presented them at their best; but did not suspect that under them there was concealed a novelist of the first order. Zola became angry and threw down the gauntlet to Paris, by publishing the famous *Curée*, in which he manifested the resolution of making a noise at any cost; that superb and horrid saturnalia of rogues in white gloves, in which, the least disgusting of loves is that of a stepson for his stepmother, and the most honest woman, a mediator. The novel in fact, created a sensation, they called it scandalous, as they do at Paris, for the sake of good

breeding; but they read the book with avidity, and that strange name *Zola* resounded for some time on all sides.

Yet this was not, however, the success which he desired and hoped for, and was less so for his later novels. The sale was small, the circle of readers limited, and Zola, who felt in himself the originality and strength of a popular novelist, was disappointed, but did not become discouraged. "I am not accustomed," he wrote, "to expect an immediate recompense for my works. For ten years I have been publishing novels without listening to hear the noise they made in falling into the crowd. When there is a pile of them the people, who are passing, will be forced to stop." His fame, nevertheless, went on increasing, although slowly. In Russia, where they keep up with all the boldest novelties in French literature, he was already noted and much thought of—but this was not enough for him. He needed a lasting and noisy success, which must raise him suddenly and forever from the ranks of writers of talent who salute each other familiarly with a wave of the hand—and this he finally attained in *l'Assommoir*. They commenced publishing it in the *Bien Public*;

but were obliged to leave it off half finished, so many were the protests launched against that "Horror" by the subscribers. Then it was printed entirely in a literary journal, and before it was finished those hot polemics commenced, which became so furious after the publication of the volume, and which will be remembered as one of the fiercest literary battles of the present day.

These polemics gave a powerful impulse to the success of the novel, and it was a noisy, enormous and incredible success. It had been years since so much had been heard about any book. For a long time Paris talked of nothing but *l'Assommoir*. One heard it loudly discussed in the cafés, theatres, reading-rooms and even in the shops; and this by the fanatical admirers, but they were more in number than the bitter adversaries. The unheard of brutality of that novel seemed a challenge, a slap at Paris, a calumny against the French people; and they called the book—"a dirty thing to be handled with the tongs," "a monstrous abortion," and a "galley offense"—and hurled against the author all the abuse that was possible, from the name of "the enemy of his country," to that of

égoutier littéraire," etc., without choosing their words. The theatrical reviews of the end of the year represented him in the clothes of a garbage-gatherer who went around collecting filth with a harpoon in the streets of Paris. "*Ce n'était plus de la critique*," as he says, "*C'était du massacre.*" They denied his talent, originality, style and even grammar,—there were even those who would not discuss him; and they came very near offering personal challenges in the streets. And the most extravagant odious rumors were circulated about him, that he was a bundle of vice, a half brute, a man without heart like Lantier, a beast like Bec-Salé, and a ugly person like his father Bezougue, the grave digger.

But meanwhile, editions succeeded editions, the dispassionate gastronomists said in a low voice that the novel was a masterpiece; the Parisian populace read it largely, because they found in it their *boulevard*, *buvette*, shop and life insuperably depicted with new colors and touches of the brush, in comparison with which all others seemed colorless, and the most enraged critics were obliged to recognise the fact, that in those pages which had been such a target, there was something that eternally blunted

the points of their arrows. The great success of *l'Assommoir* made the other novels sought after, and one may safely affirm that Zola became celebrated then. His real celebrity only dates back three years. He, himself, wrote a short time since to one of his admirers in Italy: *"On ne m'a pas gaté en France. Il n'y a pas longtemps qu'on m'y salue."*

And nevertheless his celebrity is a singular one. An immense number of people admire him, but with an admiration in which there is a little anger, and a little diffidence, and look at him from a distance, as they would at an untamed bear. He has great talent, there is no denying that, we must resign ourselves to saying it, and allowing it to be said. He is still the *lion du jour* at Paris, and has no rival but Daudet, who is not, however, of his style; but they handle each other with gloves, in order not to arouse suspicion. Zola however, is not conceited and apparently takes no notice of his celebrity. He does not force himself forward, but lives quietly in his corner, with his wife, mother and children. Very few know him by sight and it is a very rare thing to find his portrait anywhere. He does not frequent society, unless it be to study it, and when he goes

there with this aim in view, it is only to the house of Charpentier, the publisher, who has a superb establishment, where he gives fine entertainments which even Gambetta attends. He belongs to no coterie. Once he lived at the end of avenue Clichy, a most opportune place for the study of the people of *l'Assommoir*; now he lives in Rue Boulogne, where Ruffini resided and near the house of Sardou.

III.

Through my dear friend Parodi, I had the honor of knowing Zola, and of passing several hours with him.

He is a strongly built youth, resembling slightly in figure Victor Hugo, rather stouter, not very tall, erect as a column and very pale, his palor being heightened by his black beard and hair, which stands up from his forehead like the bristles of a brush. It is a curous fact that all those who see the picture of Zola, say; "This face is not unfamilar to me." He has a round face, audacious nose, and dark, bright eyes which have a critical expression; the head of a thinker and the body of an athlete, well shaped and firm hands, the kind that one shakes and holds with pleasure. He reminded me of his *Gueule d'or*, and it

seemed to me that he would be able to perform the same feats with his anvil. His vigorous frame was well set off by his dress. He was in slippers, without collar or cravat, and wore a loose unbuttoned jacket, which allowed one to see the full protruding figure, well adapted for breaking the waves of literary hatred and ire. During all the time that I was with him I never saw him laugh.

He received me courteously, with a certain soldierly civility, and without the customary formula of compliments. Hardly were we seated before he took up a paper cutter, in the shape of a dagger with a sheath, and he retained it as long as the conversation lasted, sheathing and unsheathing it in a rapid and energetic manner. We were in his study; a beautiful room full of light, decorated with many oil paintings, from which one could easily divine that he was a home-loving man, who lived much alone.

Certain descriptions, in fact, of warm rooms filled with every comfort, that are to be found in his novels, can only have been written by a man who voluntarily remains in his own little nest amid all the refinements of a good home life. He had before

him a large table covered with books and papers carefully arranged, and scattered with many little gleaming objects of graceful form like the paper cutter; which revealed a fine artistic taste. The whole room indicated the elegant ease of the Parisian writer in vogue. On one side hung a large portrait of himself, in oil, taken when he was twenty-seven.

He spoke first of the Italian language. "I regret," he said, "that I am unable to read Italian books. We Frenchmen, are, in this regard, really to be pitied. We know no language save our own. But I ought to be familiar with the Italian as my father was an Italian." And he showed us the critique of our *Emma* in the *Page d'Amour*, published by the *Antologia*, saying that he was compelled to have it translated, as in trying to read it, half the sense escaped him.

So let our courageous translators of *l'Assommoir* be resigned; Zola is not in a condition to compensate them by sincere praise for their exertions.

Then he gave Parodi, two monosyllabic replies, in which he revealed all the frankness of his nature.

Parodi had heard that a discussion about Chateau-

briand which had taken place at table between Turghénieff, Zola, Flambert and one of the Goncourt brothers, had been very warm indeed, lasting six hours, and that two of the gentlemen had defended the author of the *Génie de Christianisme* against the other two, who denied that he was a great writer. He, Parodi, thought that Zola had been one of the defenders and interrogated him on the subject in order to ascertain the truth of the matter. Then followed this curious dialogue:

"*Vous aimez beaucoup Chateaubriand?*'

"*Non.*"

"*Vous avez beaucoup lu Chateaubriand?*"

"*Non.*"

"Then you are not the one who defended him in the discussion with Monsieur Turghénieff?"

"*Jamais.*"

The defenders of Chateaubriand were Turghénieff and Flaubert; Zola and Goncourt having obstinately fought against him. These four are in the habit of taking breakfast together once a month, and every time they do so, some discussion of this kind arises, which keeps them chained to the table for half the day.

This was the introduction, after which Zola was compelled to talk of himself exclusively. My excellent friend had said to him the day before, in announcing my visit: "Prepare to undergo a series of interrogations on all subjects." And he had pleasantly replied: "I am ready." The questioning began, but I did not dare undertake it, so my friend conducted it with exquisite tact, and Zola began speaking of himself without any preamble, just as naturally, in fact, as if he were talking of some one else. There is no need of declaring with what intense interest I listened to him. Yet, just as he was beginning to talk I was seized with a fit of abstraction that made me suffer tortures. I do not know how it happened, but the ludicrous scene in the *Faute de l'Abbé Mouret* flashed across my mind, that one, in which the old Atheist *Jeanbernat* gives the beating to that miserable monk *Archangias* in the light of the moon, and I was overcome by such an intense desire to laugh, that I bit my lips until they bled to keep from doing so. Zola first spoke of his family. The mother of his father was from Candia, and his father, Francesco Zola, from Treviso. After the publication of *l'Assommoir* he received

from Italy a number of letters written by distant relatives whom he had never known. He spoke with great affection of his father, who was a military engineer in the Austrian service; a man of much cultivation, speaking Spanish, English, French and German, and who had published various scientific writings, which Zola preserved and displayed with intense pride. I do not remember in what year he left the army, but it was while he was quite young, and he began the practice of civil engineering. He went to Germany, where he worked at the building of one of the first railways, then to England and Marseilles, from whence he made several excursions to Algiers, working all the time. From Marseilles he was called to Paris for the fortifications. Here he married and here was born Emile Zola, who remained in Paris until he was three years old. Then the family moved to Aix, where Francesco Zola worked at the construction of a great canal, which was called after him, and still retains his name. Zola possessed a large portion of the bonds of this canal; worth nearly one hundred and fifty thousand francs. When he died, the company failed, and at the closing up of accounts, after the creditors were paid,

only a very small capital was left for the widow. Thus, the son, Emile, experienced want from the time he was a boy, and he passed a youth in which there was little pleasure. At eighteen he came to Paris to seek his fortune, and here there commenced for him a series of very trying experiences. He was employed for sometime in the Maison Hachette, first at a hundred francs a month, then a hundred and fifty, finally two hundred. After this he became collaborator of *Figaro*. Shortly thereafter, he lost that position and remained without work. Arriving at this point, Zola cut short his narration, but I understood from certain flashes of his eyes and from a certain compression of his lips, that that must have been the most trying period of his life. He contrived to live by scribbling here and there, but he scarcely earned enough to maintain himself, and that not every day. That was the time in which he made those deep and sad studies of his Parisian people, which appear particularly in *l'Assommoir* and the *Ventre de Paris*. He lived among the poor, dwelt in those workmen's houses which he describes so powerfully in *l'Assommoir*; in one, among the others, where three hundred of the

most miserable laborers lived. He studied vice and hunger, knew *Nana*, labored, fasted, lost heart, and struggled on bravely. But, in fine, his character was strengthened by that life and he came out from it armed and prepared for the battles which were awaiting him in the great arena of art. At the age for drafting, however, he was neither French nor Italian, and could choose between the two nationalities. "I was born here," he said. "I had here many recollections and many ties, was beginning to make my way, loved the place where I had suffered, and so chose France for my country."

Such is his early life as a man. His early literary career is no less singular, and he described it with the same frankness, continuing to play with the dagger.

He began school late, because he was not strong. "I studied little," he said, "I took prizes; but was a bad scholar." He first felt the desire to write when he was fourteen. He wrote among other things a novel on the Crusades, which he still preserves, and he put in verse long extracts in prose from Chateaubriand; a fact which should disconcert all the critics who firmly declare the indications of the character of a great writer are to be seen even in

the early manifestation of childish talent. The first authors he read were Walter Scott and Victor Hugo. "I read the two authors together," he said, "but without feeling to any great degree the difference between them, because I could not then understand either the style or language of Victor Hugo." When he began reading Balzac (and this, too, is strange) Balzac wearied him, seemed tedious, heavy and uninteresting; he neither understood him nor made him his own until long afterwards. Up to this time no reading had made a profound impression upon him. Later, when he began to read meditatively, his favorite authors were Musset, Flaubert, and Taine. One cannot imagine what attracted him in Musset, if it were not the sentiment of certain sensuous refinements of good society, which he, however, set forth in a perfectly dispassionate manner, like a calm, yet powerful artist. There is no need of speaking of Flaubert; his is the same art, extended further, more minute, more crude, drawn in brighter colors and also more wearisome. From Taine he draws particularly the system of analysis. His method is that followed by Taine in the article on Balzac; like him he proceeds quietly, firm-

ly, methodically and with a heavy tread, from which arises, according to the opinion of some, a certain lack of fluency in his style, which is especially apparent in his later works. He has, as they say in France, "*un peu le pas de l'Eléphant.*" The effect Balzac has upon him is wonderful and is most perceptible in all his books. He adores him, is his follower, and glories in it. At the appearance of his first novels, every one spoke Balzac's name. Charpentier presented him to his friends, saying: "Here is a new Balzac." For this reason he scarcely touched upon his literary father, as if the thing were an understood matter. He said nothing else of his studies. He can have no classical culture, since he himself confessed that he had found difficulty in reading certain books in Latin; and in this he is in the same condition as many of the most illustrious French writers of the period. But he educated himself, studied while struggling, like the generals of the revolution; he studies little by little, in writing a novel, all the questions which have any connection with it, just as George Sand used to do. He reads continually, forced by the imperative requirements of the polemic. He has at his fingers' end all the romances of

the century, knows Paris thoroughly, has perfect command of his language—and thinks.

When we reached the most important subject of all, Parodi asked him *ex-abrupto* how he wrote a novel. This touched him to the quick. He unsheathed nearly all the dagger, drove it back with all his force into the case, and commenced talking rapidly, growing more and more animated all the time. "This is the way," he said, "that I write a novel. I do not write it entirely, I let it write itself. I do not know how to invent incidents, this kind of imagination is entirely lacking in me. If I place myself at table to seek for a incident or any thread of romance, I may sit there for three days racking my brain, my head in my hands; I lose my patience and do not succeed in accomplishing anything. For this reason I have made the resolution never to occupy myself with the subject. I begin to work on my novel without knowing either the events which will transpire, the personages who will take part in it, or what will be the beginning and the end. I only know my leading character, my *Rougon* or *Macquart*, man or woman, who is an old acquaintance. I generally occupy myself entirely with him,

I meditate upon his temperament, the family in which he was born, the first impressions he may have received, and upon the social class to which I have determined he shall belong. This is my most important occupation, to study the people with whom this personage will have to deal, the places in which he will find himself, the air that he will have to breathe, his profession and habits, even to the most insignificant occupations to which he will dedicate different portions of the day. While studying out these things, there suddenly occur to my mind a series of descriptions which can find a place in the story, and will be like milestones on the road that he must travel. Now, for example, I am describing *Nana*, a *Cocotte*. I do not know exactly what will become of her; but I do know all the descriptions that my novel will contain. In the first place I ask myself everything. Where does the *Cocotte* go? She goes to the theatres, to the first representations. That's all right! So the story is begun. The first chapter will contain the description of a first representation in one of our most elegant theatres.

In order to do this, I must study. I attend sev-

eral first representations. To-morrow evening I go to the *Gaité*. I study the parquet, boxes, and stage; notice all the most minute details of life behind the scenes; I assist at the toilet of an actress; and on returning home I sketch out my description. A *Cocotte* goes to the races, to a *Grand Prix*. Here is another description which I will put in my story —at a suitable distance from the first one. I go to study the *Grand Prix*. A *Cocotte* frequents the great restaurants. I frequent these places for some time, I notice everything, ask questions, take notes and divine the rest. And so on until I have studied all the aspects of that side of the world, in which a woman of this kind is in the habit of moving. After two or three months of this study, I have become acquainted with that sort of life, I see, feel, and live it, in my head, so that I am sure of giving to my novel the color and real perfume of that world. Beside this, living for some time as I have done in that social circle, I have known the people belonging to it, I have heard real facts related, know what is usually happening there, have learned the language spoken there, and have in my head a quantity of types, scenes, fragments of dialogues, and episodes

that form a confused novel consisting of a thousand loose and scattered pieces. Then remains that which is the most difficult for one to do, namely, to bind with one thread, as best I can, all these reminiscences and all these scattered impressions. This is almost always a long piece of work. But I set myself at it quite phlegmatically and instead of employing imagination, I use logic. I reason with myself and write my soliloquies word for word, just as they come to me, so that, read by another, they would appear a strange thing. From which arises this result. What would be the natural consequence of an affair of this kind? This other fact. Is this other fact one that may interest some one else? Certainly. So consequently it is logical that this other person acts in this manner. Then some new character may appear, that one, for instance, whom I saw in such a place, on such an evening. I seek the immediate consequences of the smallest event; that which arises logically, naturally and inevitably from the character and situation of the personages represented. I do the work of a commissary of police who from some clue he has received wishes to succeed in discovering the author of some mysteri-

ous crime. Often I encounter, nevertheless, many difficulties. Sometimes there are not more than two very fine threads to connect, a very simple consequence to deduce, and I do not succeed, though I labor and worry over it in vain. Then I cease thinking, because I know it is lost time. Two, three or four days pass. One fine morning, at last, while I am at breakfast and thinking of something else, suddenly these two threads connect themselves, the consequence is found, and all the difficulty is at an end. Then a torrent of light runs through the whole story. "*un flot de lumière coule sur tout le roman.*" I see everything and everything is done. My peace of mind being restored, I am sure of myself, and nothing remains to be done but the most agreeable portion of my work. I seat myself quietly, methodically, with time-table in hand, like a mason.

I write just so much every day; three printed pages, not one line more, and that during the morning only. I write almost without correction, because I have been meditating upon it all for months, and barely is it written when I put the page aside, and never read it again until it is printed. I can calcu-

late infallibly the day when I shall finish it. I employed six months in writing *Une page d'Amour*; a year in writing *l'Assommoir*.

"*L'Assommoir*,"—he added, giving a blow on the handle of the dagger,—"was a torture to me. It is the one which has cost me the most trouble in putting together the smallest details, upon which it rests. I intended writing a novel on alcohol. I did not know anything else. I had collected a number of notes on the effects of the abuse of alcohol. I had determined to make a brute die the kind of death of which Coupeau died. I did not know, however, who would be the victim, and before even looking for him, I went to the hospital of St. Anne to study sickness and death, like a physician. Then I assigned to *Gervaise* the occupation of a laundress, and instantly thought of that description of a real washhouse in which I passed many hours. Then, without knowing anything of *Goujet*, whom I next imagined, I thought of making use of the recollections of the workshop of an ironmonger and a blacksmith, where I had passed half days at a time when I was a boy, and which is alluded to in the *Contes à Ninon*. Thus, before having woven the thread of my ro-

mance, I had already prepared the description of a dinner in *Gervaise's* shop and that visit to the museum of the Louvre. I had already studied my beggars, *l'Assommoir* of *père Colombe*, the shops, *Hôtel Boncœur*, everything in fact. When all that remained was disposed of, I commenced to occupy myself with that which was to happen; and reasoned thus while writing it. *Gervaise* comes to Paris with *Lantier*, her lover. What will follow? *Lantier* is a *mauvais sujet*, so she plants him. Then, will you credit it? I came to a stand still here and could not go on for several days. Several days thereafter I took another step. *Gervaise* is found; it is natural that she should marry again. She does so, and marries the laborer, *Coupeau*. This is the man who is to die at St. Anne. But here I was stopped again. In order to put the personages and scenes which I had in my head in their respective places, and to give some sort of a framework to the novel, I needed one more fact, one only, that would connect the two preceding ones. These three facts would be sufficient, the rest was all found, prepared and written out in my mind. But I could not get hold of this third fact. I passed several days quite worried

and discontented. When, suddenly one morning, I was seized with an idea. *Lantier* finds *Gervaise* again; makes friends with *Coupeau*, installs himself in the house,—*et alors il s' établit un ménage á trois, comme j'en ai vu plusieurs;* and ruin follows. I breathe again. The novel is completed."

Saying this, he opened a box, took out a roll of manuscript and placed it before me. It contained the first studies of *l'Assommoir*, on so many fly leaves.

On the first leaves was a sketch of the characters —notes about the person, temperament and character. I found the *Miroir Characteristique* of *Gervaise*, *Coupeau*, *Mamma Coupeau*, the *Lorilleux*, *Boches*, *Goujét* and *Madame Lérat*. All of them were there. They seemed the notes of a registrar of a court, written in laconic and free language, like that of the novel, and interpolated with short reasonings, like: *Born like this, educated in this manner, he will conduct himself in this way.* In one place was written: "What else can a rascal of this kind do?" Among others, I was struck with a sketch of *Lantier*, which was nothing but a list of adjectives, each one stronger than the other, such as *grossier*, *sensuel*

brutal, *egoiste*, *polisson*. In some parts was written, "Use such and such a one" (some one known by the author). All written in large, clear characters, and in perfect order.

Then I saw sketches of places, scarcely outlined, but as accurate as the drawing of an engineer. There were a number of them. All *l'Assommoir* was drawn, the streets of the quarter in which the plot was laid, with the corners and signs of the shops; the zigzag which *Gervaise* took to avoid the creditors, the Sunday escapades of *Nana*, the peregrinations of the set of topers from *bastringue* to *bastringue*, and from *bousingot* to *bousingot*; the hospital and slaughter-house, between which came and went on that terrible evening the poor ironing woman who was maddened by hunger. The great house of *Marescot* was traced minutely — all the upper story, the landings, windows, the den of the grave-digger, *Père Bru's* hole—all those dark hallways, in which one could hear *un souffle de crevaison*, those walls which resounded like empty vaults, those doors through which were heard the music of blows and the cries of *mioches*, dying from hunger. There was even the plan of *Gervaise's* shop, room by room,

with indications of beds and tables in some places erased and corrected. One could see that Zola had amused himself by the hour, quite forgetting, perhaps, the story, so buried was he in his fiction, as if it were a true record. On other pages were notes of various kinds. I remember two of them particularly—"twenty pages of description of such a thing, twelve pages of description of such a scene, to be divided into three parts." One could see from this that he had the description in his head, all arranged before it was written, and that he heard it resounding internally in measured beat, like an air to which he must put words. This way of working with the compasses is much rarer than is imagined. Even in things of the imagination, Zola is a great mechanic. One can see how his descriptions proceed, symmetrically and in turn, separated at times by a species of digression, placed there so that the reader can take breath, and divided into almost equal parts, like that of the flowers of the parlor in the *Faute de l'Abbé Mourct*, that of the thunder storm in the *Page d'Amour*, and that of the death of Coupeau in *l'Assommoir*. One would say that his mind, in order to work freely and quietly at all the minutiæ,

is obliged to trace for itself all the clear outlines of the work, to know exactly at what points it can rest, and almost what extent and what shape the work itself will present in print. When the material increases too rapidly, he cuts it so to make it fit into that given form, and when it is insufficient in quantity, he makes an effort to draw it out to a certain point. He has an invincible love of harmonious proportions, which sometimes may degenerate into prolixity, but which often, by compelling thought to dwell upon his subject, makes the work more profound and more complete.

There were beside these, notes extracted from the *Réforme Sociale en France* of Le Play, the *Hérédité Naturelle* of Docteur Lucas, and from other works that he used in writing his novel—*Le Sublime*, among others, which, after the publication of *l'Assommoir*, was re-printed and re-read, because it is the privilege of masterpieces to give honor even to mediocre works that have been of assistance to them.

Then we questioned him about his study of languages. He spoke of those with much complacency. It is generally believed that he has studied the *argot* in the common people; this is partly the case,

but more so in some especial dictionaries of which there are several excellent ones, just as he learned particularly from those dictionaries of arts and trades that very rich vocabulary of work-shops and shops, which is found in his popular novels. But in order to write the *argot* the study of the dictionary did not suffice; he had to know it, or rather make it his own. So he compiled a dictionary divided into subjects, in which he wrote as he went along, all the words and phrases that he found in books and picked up in the street. When writing *l'Assommoir*, before treating the subject, he ran through the corresponding part of the dictionary, then wrote, keeping it before his eyes, and marking with a red pencil, every phrase as he put it in the book, in order to avoid repeating it. "I am a patient man, you see," he said. "I work with the placidity of an old compiler, take pleasure even in the most material occupations, become attached to my notes and old writings; I bury myself in my work and I am as comfortable as an indolent man in his easy chair." The strangest thing about it all, is that he said all those things without smiling; not even the ghost of a smile. His very pale face never assumed

one of those thousand conventional expressions of amiability and gayety which are usual in those cold people who wish to give color to their conversation. In truth I never remember having seen a more "independent" face. There was only one movement which he made from time to time; he dilated his nostrils and clinched his teeth, thus widening his jaws, which gave him a firmer expression of resolution and pride. He spoke of the success of *l'Assommoir*. He said while writing the novel, he had no idea of the noise it would make. He had been obliged to interrupt his work on account of his wife's illness ;then he took it up again against his will, and his heart was not in it. More than all, a friend whose opinion he greatly valued, after reading the manuscript, predicted a failure. He himself thought the subject was not *interesting*. He let us divine, in fact, that not even despite its great success did he consider it his finest novel.

"Which one did you like best?" I asked him.

His reply gave me great satisfaction.

"*Le Ventre de Paris*," he replied.

And, in fact, the story of the disgusting and iniquitous plebian gossip, which ends in ruining a good

man, and which revolves from the first to the last page in that very strange theatre the *Halles*, full of color, odors, etc., among those enormous and impudent fish-vendors, among those intrigues nested in the vegetables and poultry feathers, amid that strange network of rival shopkeepers and republican plots, has always seemed to me one of the most original and happiest inventions of French genius.

He spoke, too, of the criticisms on *l' Assommoir*, and even in speaking he choose the hardest and most telling phrases with which to express his own thoughts. In mentioning a "school" which does not please him he said: "You will see what a splendid sweeping out we will give it with the besom." In every one of his words one feels his character strongly impressed, not only in the obstinate resistances, but the bold attacks. In his criticisms in fact, he spares no one. He collected several of them in a volume which he entitled, *My Hatreds*. He owes everything to himself, has passed through every kind of trial, and is covered with scars. The battle is his life, he wishes glory, but that taken by force and accompanied by the turmoil of the tempest. The most pitiless critics only increased his cour-

age. They thought him a subject for torture on account of the crudeness of the *Curée;* he went twice as far in *l'Assommoir.* He experiences savage delight in exciting the public. "The failures" don't effect him at all. "Onward!" he cried after one of his greatest falls; "I am on the ground, but art is standing. Is the battle lost because the soldier is wounded? To work! Let us begin again!" And he gives his opinion of the critics in his own particular way. *The French critics are lacking in intelligence.* Nothing more nor less than this. "There are only three or four men in France who are capable of judging a book. The others either judge it with the literary prejudices of fools, or they are perfect impostors!" He has this great fault, as a friend said of him, that when he talks to an imbecile, he gives him to understand immediately that he is an imbecile; "a defect," he said, "which closes many doors to him. But he does not care to be loved. He considers the public as his natural enemy. What use is there in caressing it? It is a wretched beast that returns your caresses with bites. It is better to show one's teeth and let it see that they are as strong as its own. It barks, so that it may

be followed. All those who argue from this asperity of character that he has no heart, are quite mistaken. All his intimate friends affirm this. At home with his family, he is another Zola, he has few friends, but loves those dearly; he is not demonstrative, but writes letters full of sentiment, and has an affectionate heart under a coat of mail.

He explained more clearly in speaking of the sale of books in Paris, the precise idea he has of the public:

"Here you can do nothing," he said, letting go of the dagger for the first time, but seizing it again instantly, "nothing at all, if you do not create a sensation. You must be discussed, ill-treated and raised in the air by the ebullition of inimical hatred, The Parisian never purchases a book spontaneously, just from curiosity; he never buys it until his ears are filled with it, and it has become an event worth chronicling, of which you must be able to talk in society. If it be spoken of, no matter what is said, its fortune is made. Criticism gives life to everything; it is only silence that destroys. Paris is an ocean; but an ocean in which you are lost in the calm, but saved in the storm. In what other way

can you arouse from indifference this enormous city, so thoroughly intent upon her affairs and pleasures, in amassing money and spending it? She only hears roars and the sound of the cannon, and woe to him who has no courage!"

This is what Parodi said to me: "Here no one is esteemed who does not esteem himself. The first thing to do is to affirm resolutely one's own right to glory. He who makes little of himself is lost—woe to the modest man!"

Zola is neither modest nor vain, but is blunt. With the same frankness with which he acknowledges the weak points of his genius, he speaks, as is seen of the strong ones. Speaking of his studies from nature, he says: "I am not obliged to see everything; one aspect is enough for me, the other I can divine;" herein lies genius. When he wrote the *Page d'Amour*, he said: "I will make all Paris weep." In defending one of his comedies which had failed, he said: "Why did it fail? Because the public expected from the author of *Rougon-Macquart* an extraordinary comedy—one of the first order—something quite miraculous." But he said this with such an air of certainty and sim-

plicity, that one could not think of accusing him of conceit. In this he reveals his Italian nature, less polished than the French, just as he reveals it in his criticisms, in which he says the severest things without choosing or softening his language, and he prepares the bitter pills without gilding them, a thing which is repugnant to the character of the French critic. He is Italian in this too, that he has our genuine causticity, consistent rather in the thing itself than in the spirit, and this is not true French wit. He is aware of this, and is proud of the fact. "*Je n'ai pas cet entortillement d'esprit. Je ne sais parler le papotage á la mode.* I detest *bons-mots*, and the public adores them. This is the principal reason why we cannot agree."

Then he touched lightly upon the question of realism and idealism. On this subject I respect profoundly the opinions of a writer like Zola. But I do not believe in these immovable professions of faith, and in these banners waved with such furor. An author writes in a certain manner because his character, education and the conditions of his life urge him on from that point. When he has gone a great distance on this road, when he has expended in this

particular form of art a great deal of his strength, and has been successful, he is persuaded that he would never get so far in a different direction, so raises his ensign and says: "*In hoc signo vinces.*" But what would this kind of art become if all followed it? A sentence of Renan's always comes to my mind, "The world is a spectacle which God has prepared for himself. Do not let us make it all one color, unless we wish to weary of it." "There is place for all," as Silvio Pellico said; "but no one will allow himself to be persuaded of the fact." I cannot understand how there can exist a class of talented people, who rap a portion of humanity over the head because it will not feel and express life as they feel and express it. It is as if thin people wished to prohibit fat ones, and lymphatic ones those who are nervous. Who does not see, that at the bottom it is simply a war which certain faculties of the mind wage against other faculties? Emile Zola, no less than the others, only draws the water towards his own mill. He will say, for instance, that Greek tragedy is realistic, and that one ought never to describe anything that is not, or has not been seen; that when a tree is put upon the

stage, it ought to be a real one; and perhaps in his heart he will laugh at these affirmations. When he is caught in contradiction, he replies ingeniously: "*Que voulez-vous? Il faut avoir un drapeau?*" We admit this, but it is almost always *not* the flag of one's own faith, but of one's own genius. Is this same Zola always realistic when he gives heart and mind to the bees and flowers? To a man like him we can well say what we think. He spoke too of the theatre. He said that it was a false statement of the newspapers that he had employed the comedy writers, whose names I have forgotten, to dramatize *l'Assommoir*. He had spoken on this subject about *La Curée* in whose leading character, *Renée*, the celebrated actress, Sarah Bernhardt, had manifested much interest. But of his novels, only one, up to the present time, *Thérèse Raquin*, he had himself converted into a drama, in which the description of that terrible marriage night of *Thérèse* and *Laurent*, where the disgusting spectre of the drowned husband appears, made a very fine scene. The theatre, however, possesses an intoxicating and irresistible attraction for Zola, as it does for all the modern writers, to whom no

literary glory seems sufficient, if it has not been crowned with a success upon the stage. Because at Paris, the most theatrical city of the world, a dramatic victory suddenly gives the fame and fortune that the success of ten books cannot bestow. His (Zola's) great ambition is to put *l'Assommoir* upon the stage. Up to the present time he has not worked, one may say, save to prepare himself for this great event. He has had no marked success, has failed more than once, but he is very persistent.

He tries to keep step with the critic, fighting in the breech, the comedy à la mode, *la comedie d' intrigue, ce joujou donné au public, ce jeu de patience*, which he would like to lead back to ancient forms, to that standard which consists entirely of types and situations, and not in that spirit *fouetté en neige, relevé d'une pointe de musc*, which pleases by its novelty, and of which nothing will be known in five years' time; to those characters largely developed into a simple and logical action, to profound and free analysis, and by dialogues chosen by every convention; to a form in fine, in which his strong powers as a writer of romance can have full scope. And propounding these theories, he defends most obstinate-

ly his dramatic works. A friend went to visit him at the *Palais Royal*, after the failure of his *Bouton de Rose*, and found him seated at a table with a pile of written pages before him. "What are you doing?" he asked. "*Vous comprenez*," he replied, "*je ne veux pas lâcher ma piéce.*" He was writing a defence of the *Bouton de Rose*, a most curious thing, in which he revealed his character better than in an epistle of five volumes. He began by an exposition of the subject of the comedy, taken in part from the *Contes drolatiques*, of Balzac, and showed how it revolved in his mind, and the rights of every character and every scene. "It is all right, then," he said. "The drama has failed,"—I repeat almost verbatim his words—"I accept all the responsibility. This drama has become very dear to me from the odious brutality with which it was treated. The savage outbursts of the crowd has raised and increased its value in my eyes. Later there will be an appeal. Literary suits are liable to abolition. The public has not been willing to understand my work, because it has not found therein that kind of *vis comica* which is sought, and which is a thoroughly Parisian flower, blooming on the side-walks of the

boulevards. It has found my wit coarse! Diable! How can they stand the bluntness of a man who came forward in a honest way, calling things by their name? Yes, the flower of the old French narrative exists no longer, these types are no longer understood. I ought to have placed a notice on the backs of all my characters. And then a good half of the theatre prayed that my *Bouton de Rose* might fail. They had gone there as you go into the tent of a wild beast tamer, with the secret desire of seeing me devoured. I have made many enemies by my theatrical critiques, in which sincerity was my only strength. He who judges the works of others exposes himself to retaliations. The vexed *Vaudevillisti* and the exasperated dramatists said to themselves: "At last! We will go for once and criticise this terrible man!" In the orchestra there were gentlemen who avowed to each other their intentions. Then there was another reason. I am a novelist. This is enough. If I should succeed in the theatre I should occupy too much space. It was necessary to prevent this. And on the other hand it was only just that I should suffer for the forty-two editions of *l'Assommoir*, and the eighteen edi-

tions of the *Page d'Amour.* 'Let us destroy him!' they said, and they did it. People listened to the first act, hissed the second and refused to hear the third. The tumult was such that the critics could not hear the names of the charaters; some innocent words of *argot* burst into the theatre like bomb-shells; the walls threatened to tumble, and nothing could be understood. This is the way I was killed. Now I no longer have any feeling of rancor or sadness. But the day after I could not suppress a just feeling of indignation. I thought that the second evening the comedy would not reach the second act. It seemed to me that the paying public ought to complete the disaster. I went to the theatre, very late, and climbing the stairs I asked an artist, "Are they growing angry up there?" The artist replied, smilingly, "Oh, no, sir; all the jokes were enjoyed. *La salle est superbe,* and they are killing themselves laughing." It was true; no sign of disapprobation was to be heard; the success was immense. I remained there through one act to listen to that laughter, and I almost choked as I felt the tears filling my eyes. I thought of the theatre the first evening, and I asked myself the reason of that

inexplicable brutality, from the moment that the true audience gave my work such a different kind of reception. These are the facts. Let the honest critics give me an explanation. *Bouton de Rose* had four representations; the largest sum of money was taken in at the second. For what reason was it allowed? Because the press had not spoken, and the public came and laughed with confidence. The third day the critics began their work of strangulation; the first discharge of furious articles wounds the comedy to the heart; and then the people hesitate and withdrew from a work which not one voice defends, and which the most tolerant cast into the mire. The few curious ones who ventured, enjoyed themselves immensely; the effect increases at every representation; the artists, growing franker, act with a marvellous unity. What does this matter? The strangulation has been successful; the audience of the first evening drew the cord, and criticism gave to it the final tug. Nevertheless, the *Bouton de Rose* holds its own upon the stage, provided there be any one who deigns to hear it. I think it well written, that certain situations are amusing and original, and that time will acknowledge this. Some one said in

the corridor of the theatre on the first evening: 'Well, will Emile Zola continue to be a theatrical critic?' They will see whether I will be one or not. And more boldly, too, than before—they may rest assured of that."

The conversation fell once more upon his novels, and Zola satisfied my curiosity upon some points. His characters are almost all of them recollections or acquaintances of other times, some of them sketched even in the *Contes à Ninon*. *Lantier*, for instance, he knew in flesh and blood, and he is, in fact, one of the most wonderfully life-like characters in *l'Assommoir*.

The idea of the monk *Archangias*, in the *Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*, of that comical hooded villain who preached religion in the language of an intoxicated porter, he took from a provincial paper, where he read the account of a certain monk, a schoolmaster, who had been condemned for abuse of—force. Certain queer replies which the accused had given the judges presented the character perfectly complete. While he was talking of that novel, I could not refrain from expressing to him my great admiration of those splendid pages in which he described

the religious ecstacies of the young priest before the image of the Virgin, pages worthy of a great poet.

"You cannot imagine," he replied "the trouble that that wretched *Abbé Mourct* cost me. In order to be able to describe him at the altar, I went several times to hear Mass at *Nôtre Dame*. For his religious education I consulted many priests. No one, however, could give me all the explanations that I needed I overturned shops of Roman Catholic books, devoured immense volumes on religious ceremonies and manuals for curates in the country, but I still seemed to lack sufficient material for my work. A priest who had abandoned his orders gave me the necessary information."

I asked him if he had made as accurate and practical studies in order to describe the life of the *Halles*, the cheese shops, the work of the ironing women, the discussions in parliament and the language of the working men.

"Necessarily," he replied.

"And to describe the thunder storm in the '*Page d'Amour*'"

"To describe that scene, I got thoroughly drench-

ed several times in viewing Paris from the towers of *Nôtre Dame*."

I asked him if he had ever witnessed a battle. He replied in the negative, and this surprised me very greatly, because in the battle between the insurgents and the imperial troops, in the *Fortune des Rougons*, you can hear the whistling of the balls and see disorder and death as no other writer has ever represented them.

At last he began speaking of his future novels, and in this conversation he grew more animated than ever—his face became tinged with a light red, his voice grew stronger, and I cannot tell you how he used that dagger.

He is going to write a novel in which he will describe French military life as it is. This will raise a tempest, and will give him enemies in France, but no matter. The book will be called *Le Soldat*, and will contain a grand description of the battle of Sedan. He will go on purpose for this to Sedan, and will remain there fifteen days, studying the ground like a guide, inch by inch, and perhaps something will come of it. In another novel he will describe the death of an intemperate man from spontaneous com-

bustion. Others have done this, but he will do it in his own particular way. The man will have the habit of passing the evening beside the fire-place, his pipe in mouth, and he will take fire while lighting it. He will describe everything; and saying this, he knit his brows and his eyes flashed as if he saw at that very moment the horrible spectacle. The people in the house will enter the room the following morning and will find nothing but the pipe and *a handful of something* (*une poignée de quelque chose*). Then he will write a novel which will have for its subject *Commerce*, the *Grands Magasins*, the *Louvre* and the *Bon Marché*, the conflict between great and small commerce, of the millions with the hundred thousand francs—a vast and original subject, full of new colors, new type and new scenes, which he will use as a red hot iron in treating a new kind of sore in Paris. Then another novel, *The Struggle of Genius Making a Way for Itself in the World*, a band of young men who go to Paris to seek their fortunes, the life of journalism, literary life, art, criticism, poverty in decent dress, the efforts, desperations and triumphs of young men of genius who are devoured by ambition and hunger—a history in which he will

pour out all the blood which issued from the wounds of his heart when he was twenty; and, finally, a novel more original than any of the others, which will turn upon a network of railroads—a great station in which ten roads cross each other, and for every pair there will be some episode, and all these trains will meet at the principal station. The whole novel will have the coloring of the place: and one will hear therein, with an accompaniment of music, the tumult of that busy life. There will be love in the coupés, accidents in the tunnels, the working of the locomotive, the collision, crash, disaster and flight—all this black, smoky, noisy world in which he has lived in thought for a long time. These will all be novels of the *Rougon-Macquart* style. He has already in his mind, like a vision, thousands of scenes—confused sketches, clear pages, tremendous catastrophes, amusing adventures and striking descriptions, which come to him constantly and are the vital food of his soul. He has still eight novels to write. When the history of *Rougon-Macquart* is finished, he hopes that, judging the entire work, the critics will do him justice. Meanwhile, he works quietly, and goes straight forward to his appointed

goal without looking to right or left. His study is his citadel, in which he feels himself secure, and forgets the world, so absorbed is he in *les graves jouissances de la recherche du vrai*.

"You see, he said at last, "I am a home-loving man. I am good for nothing without my pen, inkstand, that portfolio before my eyes and this footstool under my feet. Taken out of my nest there is nothing of me. This is the reason that I have no desire to travel. When I arrive in a strange city the same thing always happens. I shut myself up in my room, get out my books and read incessantly for three days, without putting my nose outside the door. On the fourth day I go to the window and count the people passing by. The fifth day I take my departure."

"There is, however," he added, "a journey which I shall certainly take—a journey to Italy."

"When?" I asked, anxiously.

"When I have finished *Nana*," he replied. "Probably next spring. It is one of my greatest desires."

He asked, in fact, which were the most propitious months for a journey with his family into Italy. It is needless to say how strongly I urged him not to

change his mind, and with what pleasure I saw in imagination a superb banquet, at which were seated Italian idealists and realists of every age and kind, fraternizing for one evening at least, in order to do honor to a great genius and a strong and sincere character.

Meanwhile, he continued to talk as he stood near the door, with that same manly and amiable frankness, with those resolute gestures and his beautiful pale, proud face. Seen thus at the end of his elegant study, filled with books and papers and gilded by a ray of sunlight, he presented the appearance of an exquisite picture, representing genius, fortune and strength; and the voices of the two little Zolas, who were playing in an adjoining room, added to it a lovely feature which rendered it sweeter and more noble still.

Those last words which he said to me at the door, as he pressed my hand with one of his, while the other held back the *portière*, will ever resound in my ears:

"*Je suis toujours trés sensibles aux poignées de main amicales, qui me viennent des étrangers; mais ce n'est pas d'un étranger que me vient la vôtre; c'est de l'Italie de ma premièrc patrie, où est né mon père. Adieu!*"

V.

PARIS.

No matter how much you may enjoy being in Paris, there comes a time when you weary of the city.

After the fever of the first few days has passed, when you begin to become familiar with that tumultuous life, you are disenchanted, as you would be in seeing the city very early in the morning, while it is still sleepy and dishevelled. How ugly Paris is at that hour! Those famous boulevards, so bright and gleaming but a short time since, are only great irregular streets lined with miserable houses, high and low, faded, tarnished and crowned on the summits with a horrible confusion of tall chimneys which seem like the frame-work of unfinished buildings; and everything being still closed and veiled, one only sees a gray and solitary space, in which, one no longer recognizes at the first glance, the most

noted places. Everything seems tarnished, worn out, and full of repentance and sadness, from which the few carriages that pass rapidly by, seem to be fleeing like sinners surprised by shame and the dawn after the last orgies of carnival. "Are these the boulevards?" you say with a feeling of sadness, as you stand before this miserable spectacle. So thus after some months of Paris life, you exclaim: "This is then Paris?"

Yet the first few months are delightful, especially so, from the changes which take place in us. One experiences a redoubling of physical activity from the effect of the increase in the value of time, and the watch, until then despised, assumes the direction and guidance of our daily life. Then, days after our arrival, without our being aware of the fact, our usual gait is quickened and the range of our thoughts is enlarged. Everything, even amusement, demands forethought and care. Every step has its aim, every day presents itself from the time we wake, divided into a series of occupations; so that none of those little idle moments remain which, like the irregular rests in a military march, rather weaken than strengthen one. The most torpid

indolence is aroused and conquered. The sensual and intellectual life are so subtly intertwined, and entangle us for whole days in so fine a net of pleasure, that it is quite impossible to make our escape. A wild curiosity about thousands of things takes possession of us, and makes us run around from morning until night with questions on our lips and our purses in hand like starving people in search of food. The crime which creates a sensation, the king who is passing, the luminary that is extinguished, the glory which rises, scientific solemnity, the new books, scandal and pictures, together with exclamations of surprise and the loud laughter of Paris, succeed each other so rapidly that there is not even time to turn around and glance at everything, and we are obliged to defend our liberty of thought if we desire to attend to any kind of work. Everything is dashing along, and the slightest repose produces an overflow. We stay forty-eight hours in the house, and it is like remaining a month in an Italian city. Upon coming out we find a hundred new things in the usual places into which we had glanced, and a hundred in the conversation of our circle of friends, so

we return home with a seine full of news and ideas stamped with a witty opinion, and divided into change which we can spend immediately.

At the end of a few days, we find ourselves in the condition of every good Parisian citizen; that is, we make an exchange of our information or wit for all the learning and wit which surround us, so thoroughly do we feel in that dizzy and whirling multitude all the heat and palpitation of the life of all around us.

No matter how quietly one may live, the great city is whispering in our ears continually, heating our faces with its breath, obliging us little by little to think and live in its way, and arousing every passion.

After fifteen days there, the most restless stranger is as quiet as a cat under the stroking of its perfumed hand. One feels a voluptuous irritation, (like the fumes of a deceitful wine rising little by little to the head) which is produced by the hurry of that life, its splendor, odors, its aphrodisiacal kitchen, exciting spectacles, and by the sharp way in which every idea strikes us; and not a month has passed before that everlasting song, "Pretty women, thea-

tres and suppers," tyrannically fills our heads, and all our thoughts centre therein. We have before us an ideal of life quite different from that we had when we arrived, easier for the time and harder for the purse, and with which our consciences have already had many little cowardly transactions before we are aware of it. Certainly this is no place for any great sorrow, because it is terrible for one bowed down with grief, to feel that immense crowd hurrying on to pleasure, passing over him.

But Paris is for youth, health and fortune, giving to these what no other city can ever bestow. Certain conditions of mind, brief but delicious, are peculiar to that life, like the passing in a carriage through one of those superb and noisy streets toward evening, under a beautiful blue sky freshened by a spring-time thunder storm, thinking that after the drive, a superb banquet crowned with white shoulders and full of excitement is awaiting us. After the banquet a new comedy of Augier, then an hour in a circle of cultivated and congenial friends at the Café Tortoni; and finally in bed, a chapter from Flaubert's new novel, between every line of which we think of the excur-

sion to be made the following morning to St. Cloud. In no other city are given hours so full of pleasurable sensations and expectations, not each hour, but each quarter, is laden with mysterious promises and riddles that keep the mind in the suspense of a hope for something unexpected which is the chief nourishment of life. We have a friend in Japan, from whom we have not heard in years. Let us station ourselves in front of the *Grand Café*, between the hours of four and five, and it is not at all improbable that we may see him pass. There we have every thing at first hand. We are in the advance guard, among the first of the great army of humanity, to see the face of the new idea, as it advances, and the heel of error that is fleeing away, the new direction of the road after its turn, and instantly our *amour propre* is engrafted with a kind of Parisian vain glory, of which we only rid ourselves at the station on leaving town, but which takes possession of even those who detest the city from the very day of their arrival.

It is useless to attempt to escape from that whirlpool of ideas and conversations. Discussion awaits us at a hundred points, provoking us with

wit, ridicule, paradoxes and absurdities, obliging the most disagreeable man to become a soldier in that conflict. From the beginning one is outdone, and no matter how clever one may be, it is impossible to find a word to say. At the dinners, particularly toward the end, when all faces are flushed, one does not dare hurl his own rocket in the midst of those furious ones sent off in that loud and rapid conversation. The sarcastic smile of the beautiful woman, who seems to be using us (new to such customs) for her experiments in *anima vili*, and the nonchalance of the young man with such artistically arranged hair, who is a trifle malicious, and always ready with his bow stretched, to shoot the ridiculous on the wing, upset our nerves, and despite several gray hairs, make us blush. But then from the casket of liqueurs a jet of the silvery eloquence of the guests bursts out for us, and a small triumph won there in that terrible arena seems to us the first real victory of our lives. Every day we seem to acquire something. The tongue loosens, and also in speaking the language itself, we succeed more and more easily in finding in this language, which is always a trial of dexterity, the shortest and most lucid ex-

pressions of our thoughts; the wit is sharpened, whetted as it always is, by the coming in contact with the blade of a rival, the sense of the ridiculous continually exercised becomes refined, and little by little the gaily courageous philosophy of the *boulevardier*, (for whom the world begins at the Porte St. Martin and ends at the Madeleine) attaches itself to us with the Parisian smile.

But the little load of cares and regrets which we brought from home were swept away as soon as we arrived by the first wave of that enormous sea, and we no longer see it save as a black speck in the distance. Meanwhile, the circle of friends grows rapidly larger, and we contract new habits; all our foibles and weaknesses find soft spots in which to take their ease. The terror which the grandeur of Paris caused us is succeeded by the joy of that liberty which arises from it; the tumult that deafened us at first ends by soothing the ear, like the noise of an enormous waterfall; that immense, fictitious magnificence fascinates us at last like the cleverly tinselled poetry of an ingenious disciple of the sixteenth century; our step resounds on the sidewalks of the boulevards, as Zola says: *Avec des fami-*

liarités particulières. Our minds become accustomed to puns, the palate to sauces, the eye to painted faces, and the ears to songs sung in the falsetto; little by little, a deep and delicious depravity of taste takes possession of us, until one fine day we discover that we are thorough Parisians.

Ah! then, during the first portion of that honeymoon everything is pardonable. Corruption! That makes us laugh. All the most dissolute people of the world gather there, famishing for vice, outraging every sense of decency and decorum, and angry because they cannot do worse, and who, when they have emptied their purses and exhausted themselves, return home crying: What a dissolute place! Ah, it is well for the other large cities of Europe to cry out against the scandal, the hypocrisy, and then against the levity! This is true; but the grave thoughts of other nations remind us of the German poet ridiculed by Heine; whose bachelor thoughts make their own coffee, shave themselves, and go to gather flowers on their own birthday in the garden of Brandeburg. Then the *blague!* What if this has fastened itself

upon us strangers during our month's sojourn there, and we carry away a little of it for our own consumption when we return to our modest little countries! But we have something else to do than defend Paris while we are tossed about in her arms. Time flies. We do not wish to lose an hour of it. We have a thousand things to investigate, study and enjoy. We are seized by the mania to put into every day, like the thief into the sack, all the riches we can imagine; an implacable demon chases us by blows of his whip from salon to salon, the theatre to the academy, the illustrious man to the *bouquiniste*, the café to the museum, the ballroom to the newspaper office; and in the evening, when the great city, always amiable and gay, has told and given us all that we asked; when we sit at supper with our friends, weary, but content at feeling our booty safely deposited in heart and head, we commence our jokes and anecdotes, and the first glass of champagne gilds all the recollections of the day; then, with an outburst of enthusiasm, we greet the great Paris, loving and magnificent hostess, who opens her arms to all, gives a profusion of kisses, gold and ideas, and rekindles in all hearts with its breath

of youth the fervor of glory and the love of life.

But after a few short months, what a change takes place! A bitter dislike for the most trifling thing begins to grow in your heart; then a new one springs up every day, and at the end of a month you would like to escape from Paris, giving her the famous salute of Montesquieu to Genoa:

> "Adieu * * * sejour détestable;
> Il n'y pas de plaisir comparable
> A celui de te quitter."

It is really a strange revulsion of ideas, but it happens to nearly all, I fancy. Some fine day you are disgusted with an insipid joke which has been made over a hundred times in the paper you read every day. The following morning your nerves are jarred by that coagulated smile of your landlady, which resembles all the smiles you see everywhere in Paris when you go to pay a bill, and in the street you observe that the uniform of the gensdarmes has become intolerable to you. Then, little by little, you grow enraged at the employé with glasses and moustache, who asks your name, country and profession in order to sell you a ticket for the *Théâtre Francais;* at the stupid self-conceit of the *concierges*, the

impertinence of those ridiculous waiters in white skirts, the brutality of the cabmen, and the self-importance assumed by *tout ce qui est un peu fonctionnaire*. Those ten paid rascals, who, every evening at all the theatres, wish to make you applaud that same couplet—those eternal romances sung with the voices of hens plucked alive, which you are called upon to enjoy at all the houses.

Then you are surfeited with those dinners of numbered and classified mouthfuls, all that display of prices, in centimes, that indescribable, niggardly and pedantic something of a college boarding-school, disguised by the gorgeousness of a booth at a fair; that everlasting sacrifice of everything to appearance, that polished and pretentious elegance, that perpetual smell of a wine-merchant and cosmetics, those superb houses, winding staircases, boxes of shops, hencoops of theatres, that *réclame* of mountebanks, that bazaar-like grandeur, that wretched fountain, consumptive-looking tree, black wall and muddy asphalt; and scarcely outside of the heart of the city, those immense and uniform suburbs, those interminable spaces which are neither city nor country, scattered with great, sad and

solitary houses; those small orphan-asylum looking gardens and those theatrical-looking villages. Is this the great Paris? If an earthquake should overturn all the show-windows and a heavy rain wash out all the gilding, what would remain?

Where is the richness of Genoa, the beauty of Florence, the grace of Venice and the majesty of Rome? Are you really pleased with that vainglorious parody of St. Peter's, the *Pantheon*, that Greek-Roman temple, the *Bourse*, or that enormous and superb cavalry barracks, the *Tuileries*, and the opéra comique like appearance of the Place de la Concorde, the façades of the little rococo theatres, the towers in the shape of gigantic clarions and the cupolas built on the model of a jockey cap? This is the city which resembles Athens, Rome, Tyre, Nineveh and Babylon? Say rather Sodom and Gomorra. You do not so describe it on account of the greatness of its corruption, but for its insolence.

At your home, at least, as some French women say to you, *elles se conduisent bien.* But where does one see out of Paris a double row of questionable houses with the beauties exposed upon the sidewalks, and a thousand restaurants where the

mots crus are flung from one part of the room to the other, or they play at fencing with the feet under the table, with the friend of the heart, in perilous thrusts?

And what a variety! Go to the *Folies Bergère.* You seem to hear little machines laughing; it is as if they had all taken a course of coquetry from the same teacher; they do not move a muscle without some aim in view; they regulate the art of seduction by the thermometer, in order not to spoil it, and they make it rise degree by degree, having a regular tariff for every degree. The beauty is all in closed carriages or inaccessible salons, in the light of the sun are only those dried up specimens of "gasping and half-living frailty," or large women, immovable behind the counters, like great cats—those enormous antigeometrical faces, which do not say an earthly thing. And the masculine sex, too! That hive of *gommeux*, monsters of men, dressed like tailors' blocks, from which emerge the edge of the handkerchief and the tip end of the little purse, little glove and little walking stick; *environnés*, as Dumas says, *d'une lègère atmosphere de perruquier*, without shoulders, chest, head or blood,

who seem made on purpose to have their hats kicked off by the dancing girls of the *Valentino*.

And that rabble of young and old men belonging to all classes of society! Three hundred "citizens" hang over the side of a bridge to see a dog washed; if a drum passes a crowd collects; and a thousand people, in one railway station, make a tremendous uproar by clapping their hands, shouting and laughing because one of the guards of the train has lost his hat. Take care that you do not cough here, because if you do so, the whole thousand may begin to cough for three-quarters of an hour. What democrats! Yes, these they are; democrats in blood, great scoffers at every kind of vanity, like *Monsieur Poirier*. Your intimate friend will put a fresh ribbon on his eyeglasses because he is to dine quietly with you at home; the rich linen draper announces to you, with a radiant face, (as if it were a triumph for his house), the fact that a *sous-préfet dégommé* is coming to dinner; the *sergents de ville* take certain liberties with the crowd, the half of which (with us) would be sufficient to excite a riot; and the sovereign people, at public fêtes, are stopped at every passage by sentinels and barricades, crushed and

treated with such brutality that even the aristocratic *Figaro*, the paper which combines with so much grace the description of a Holy Communion and the anecdote of the *fille aux Cheveux Carotte*, feels obliged to raise a cry of indignation. Where could one ever find a literature more thoroughly fascinated by decorations, writers whose mouths water so ingenuously at the sound of a title, and who put more coats of arms or more aristocratic haughtiness into their works? When will these obstinate drawing-room hangers-on free us from their everlasting viscounts and marquises? Have they not yet served up a sufficient number of those leading characters of theirs, so noble, young, handsome, witty, courageous, and irresistible, who possess all the gifts that the Lord can bestow, even to *une jolie voix de ténor?*

Then those men so greedy for decorations. Great Heavens! That poor Paul de Kock, who at seventy-four, writes twenty pages to prove that he cares nothing about not having received the Legion of Honor, when he is almost ready to cry over his disappointment? And where is there another democratic country in which the writers heap such insulting ridicule upon entire classes of society, where the

epithet *bourgeois* has assumed in the minds of all those to whom it appertains a more aristocratically disdainful significance, and where one single name bearing the plebian stamp, is sufficient to make a whole parquet shriek with laughter? What is this curious mixture of contradictions, the Parisian? Who can tell? Seize him and he slips out of your hands; ask him one of those leading questions in which a man's character is generally revealed, and he will parry it with all the skill of a magician. They are witty; this has been sung in every key, but only up to a certain point. They have a large collection of propositions, and of cunning and very elastic phrases, with which they extricate themselves from any difficult situation, always trimming their words in keeping with a certain kind of wit more profound, but less clever. There are many Parisians, certainly, who are very witty, but these do the work for all the others. Their superiority lies in the fact that the majority of the population is an excellent conductor of this species of intellectual electricity, by which the *bon-mot* uttered in the morning by one person, and going the rounds with marvellous rapidity, becomes the property of thousands in the evening, and every

one is enriched by all this circulating wealth of wit.

Yet whether the *gamin* of Paris be so much more clever than the *vallione* of Naples, or the *beccrino* of Florence is quite a question. What a study they make of it. They prepare themselves for dinner, go to entertainments with their repertoire well selected and arranged, and conduct the conversation in zig-zags, jumps, turns, and leaps with remarkable tact, in order to utter some trifle at a certain time. There is a great resemblance between these second-hand wits; if you hear one *Commis Voyageur*, you have heard a thousand. There are certain ingredients and a certain mechanism for the distillation of that wit, which, once discovered, is ruined, like the *reserve* thrusts of a fencer. Still they cling to it! It really excites one's pity and disdain to see the infirm old man affected by incipient delirium tremens, who, when he has succeeded in the crowd in making a play upon words, at which five idiots smile, raises his forehead gleaming with joy and glory, and moves off in a perfect state of bliss for a week! Then this universal mania *de faire de l'esprit*, which narrows one's mind, makes one say so many stupid things, and so often sacrifices common sense, dignity and

friendship to a *success* of five minutes, is like a veil continually waved before the mind which perturbs the sight of the souls. Can you ever tell what a man is concealing behind that everlasting joke? But there are many other intangible barriers between the Parisian and yourself. The Parisian belonging to good society seems to be a frank sort of man, but is not really one. It is seldom that you can enjoy the pleasure of an easy and familiar conversation with him. Preoccupied, as he always is, by the thought of being the object of curiosity and study for strangers, he is on his guard, regulates his gestures and smile, studies the inflections of his voice, tries continually to justify the admiration which he presupposes that you have for him, and has always a little of that coquetry of women and the vanity of an artist. Every moment you are seized with the desire to say to him, "Let us remove our gloves for once." His nature corresponds with his style of dress, which, even when it is simple, has some trifle about it that betrays the effeminate efforts of a dandy. He is affable, without doubt, but it is a kind of affability which keeps you at a certain distance, like the light hand of a girl who does not

wish to be touched. As for the Spaniard, he makes you feel his superiority with such an amount of ostentation that you are completely overwhelmed. But the Parisian humiliates you so delicately, by pin pricks, with the perpetual and pointed smile of one who is tasting *sauce piquante*, putting to you listless questions, slightly tinged with a benevolent curiosity about your affairs. Oh, poor Italians, how your *amour propre* is crushed at Paris! If you do not name Dante, Michel Angelo and Raphael, you will not elicit anything but a *Qu 'est ce que c'est que ca?* for any of the other writers whom you may mention. The papal deputy asks you if Civita Vecchia still adheres to the Pope. The excellent pater familias sees brigands with their guns slung over the shoulders quietly smoking before the *Café d'Europe* at Naples. The gentleman has doubtless been in Italy, but only in order to talk of Italy with some beautiful woman in the recess of the window after dinner; or to append that bauble *Italy* to the chain of his knowledge, in order to play with it in idle moments, with the usual phrases every Frenchman possesses, about landscapes, pictures and hotels.

The famous De Forcade said of Mazoni at table:

"*Il a du talent.*" They are almost ready to ask you in fact. "Can any one be born in Italy?" This idea of having been born at Paris, of having had this sign of predilection from God, is the leading thought of the Parisian, like a star, which irradiates his whole life with a heavenly consolation. The benevolence he shows to all strangers is inspired to a great degree, by a feeling of commiseration for them, and his dislikes of them is not a profound one, simply from the fact that he considers his enemies sufficiently punished by the fate which caused them to be born where they were. For this reason he worships all the childishness and vices of his native city, and is proud of them, only because they belong to Paris, which, to his mind, is above all human criticism. Can one find any capital city which is more insolent to the people from the provinces, represented by its writers as a mass of crétins? and authors who offer incense to their city with a more outrageous impudence, not only to any other national *amour propre*, but to all human dignity? They will tell you to your face, from the stage, that the smoke from its chimneys are the ideas of the universe! All lie prostrate on the ground before this enormous cour-

tezan, mother and nurse of all vanities; of that rabid vanity of pleasing her first among them all, of obtaining from her, at any cost, at least one single glance; of that disgusting vanity which induces a writer to declare himself, in the preface of an infamous novel, capable of all the baseness and all the crimes of Heliogabalus and Nero. Take then, joking aside, their prefaces full of grimaces, puerilities, boasts and impostures. Vanity is stamped upon them all. There is not in all contemporary literature one of those grand, modest, benevolent and logical characters which write with the splendors of the mind, the dignity of life; one of those lofty and pure figures, before which one uncovers his head without hesitation and reserve, and whose name is a title of nobility and a comfort to humanity. All is overpowered and spoiled by the mania for *pose*; *pose* in literature, *pose* in religion, *pose* in love, *pose* even in the greatest afflictions. An immense and diseased sensuality constitutes the foundation of that life, and is revealed in letters, music, architecture, fashions in the sound of the voice, glances and even in the gait. Amusement! All the rest is only a means of attaining this end. From one limit to the

other of those superb boulevards resounds a loud laugh of derision for all the scruples and all the modesty of the human soul. And a day arrives at last, in which you become indignant at that life; a day in which you find yourself fearfully weary of that theatre, impregnated with the odor of gas and patchoule, where every spectacle ends in a canzonette; in which you are satiated with puns, *blague*, dances, dyes, *réclame*, cracked voices, false smiles, and purchased pleasures; then you despise that shameless city, and it seems to you that in order to purify yourself after three months of that life, you ought to live for a year on the summit of a mountain, and you feel an irresistible desire to run through green fields in the open air, to smell the odor of the ground and to refresh your soul and blood in solitude, face to face with nature.

The fit of passion is over, that is well. "Let us stand aside so that it may pass," as the Spanish say. At Paris you can say whatever you choose; she takes no more notice of us than do the elephants in the zoological gardens of the children whom they carry upon their backs on holidays. But these are not our last impressions of Paris.

The period in which everything looks rose-color and that in which everything seems black, is followed by a third that is a return in the direction of the first; that period, in which one commences to live peacefully in a circle of choice and well tried friends. And one must confess it; the friend found there, the good, honest Frenchman is really worth two. In no other European do you find a more amiable harmony of mind, heart and manner. Between the friendship, more expansive than profound, of the Southern Europeans, and that deep, but reserved one of the North, you prefer this, so warm and cold at a time and so full of solemnity and delicacy. How charming it is, when one is weary of the noise of the great city, to go in the evening to the other bank of the Seine, into a silent street, to visit the quiet, little family, which lives, as it were, on an island in the middle of that turbulent ocean. What a warm welcome you receive, what unreserved gayety you find at that refined but modest table, and how thoroughly your mind rests there. Paris itself offers you many retreats from its dangers and a thousand remedies for its fevers. After an exciting night, with what inexpressible pleasure do you dash through its

beautiful groves, and the gay suburbs of the Seine, where you find the gayety of a country festival, and into its vast gardens in the midst of an enormous hive of children, or through one of its immense and solitary avenues, in which the heart and mind expand, and the sad image of the Babylon on the boulevards seems to you so far away. Everywhere you find a people who reveal more defects the more you study them; but in whom every defect is counterbalanced by some admirable quality.

They are a frivolous people, but one in whom a noble and resolute word always finds an echo. There is always an open and safe road by which to arrive at their hearts. There is no elevated sentiment or beautiful idea which does not take root in their souls. Their quick intelligence makes all the communications of the mind both easy and agreeable. The chance word, shading, half-uttered suggestion, that which is taken for granted, the accent, and the hint are seized on the wing. A thousand people re-united have but one soul with which to feel and comprehend. It is impossible not to be attracted by those fêtes, tumultous gatherings, in which enjoyment makes all states and conditions

equal, and an innumerable crowd is nothing but one immense assembly of happy thoughtless friends. Their most obstinate enemy must burst out into a hearty laugh and open his heart to all this benevolence. Because underneath all the childishness of the Parisian, there lies as surely a fund of goodness, as under a splendid froth, an excellent wine. He is naturally unreserved, his manners do not reveal this fact; not diffident, easier to be deceived than to deceive; inclined to forgive injuries, conciliating, scornful of trivial rancor and all the petty niggardliness of life. He is constantly, by nature, in a state of mind in which one finds every one after a gay banquet where wine flows freely; equally ready to commit some great folly or do something grand, to embrace a sworn enemy, to provoke his neighbors by a word, to play a buffoon trick standing on the table, or to take pity on some little beggar who is asking for bread at the door. When he gets beyond the little circle of his ordinary existance, the spectacle of that immense life of Paris exalts all his faculties and all his good and bad feelings. We too are similarly affected. The aggrandizement in the proportions of everything gives us little by little an-

other idea of the things themselves. Even the corruption—enormous and enticing as it is, ends by fascinating us like a vast and varied field of study, rather than repelling us by its ugliness; and we accustom ourselves to it almost as if it were a needful feature of life, or a grand and terrible school, containing a great number of experiences and ideas and set in motion by the springs of a thousand powerful minds.

In the Bullier hall, amid that whirlpool of three hundred girls dancing together and singing in a *perruque-blonde* voice, instead of an outcry against corruption, there springs from our hearts an inspiring hymn to Truth and Life. Disgusted with the countries where not even vice and its language are original, we find here at least, the absence of that lowest and vilest form of corruption, which is the mania for feigning it out of vain-glory, when one has neither the strength or means of enjoying it in its tremendous fulness. Little by little, we persuade ourselves that many of the diseases which we believed to be caused by guilt, are only here the efflorescence of a too rich blood, while it is the lack of vitality which makes

other nations flaunt certain negative virtues in the face of Paris, to whom one might say, as the Messalina of Cossa did to Silio, "You are so corrupt that you do not support the greatness of Vice." Thus in all the different phases of life, you find there, (with a feeling of mingled regret for yourself and admiration of Paris), the original of a thousand things, of which at home you have seen the counterfeit reduced to pocket form for a more diminutive people.

There you feel disposed to lay much to pride, when you observe things at no great distance, and can put yourself in the place of a people who see themselves imitated by the universe; who see gathered and carried all about the crumbs from their table, renowned works made from the cuttings of their own; busts raised at certain times and in certain places to people who have no other merit than that of being subscribers to the *Revue des deux Mondes;* their language purloined and mixed with many foreign ones, their novels and theatres stolen, all the hear-says of their history and chronicles treasured up; the whole city known like the palm of one's hand. *Tortoni* more famous than many an immortal

monument; the *Maison Dorée*, the first of all the dreams of the dissolute of the whole world; their fashions copied, their laughs repeated, their jokes rehearsed, their caprices adored; and one can also understand how angry they grow when one of their most pedantic scholars insults them. Why should one be astonished that people think only of themselves in a country so ardently admired, by deed if not by word? But this defect is not injurious to them or to others, since it arises from a profound knowledge of her own affairs, from regarding them with an excess of affection, and from the belief that the entire world regards them with the same esteem, that warm, high colored, original and vital something, which they exhibit in all the manifestations of themselves. They have a smaller field to traverse, as Schiller said of himself to Goethe; but traverse it in less time in all its parts. For this reason there is an unending continuation and combination of direct ideas and thoughts toward the same point, a great frequency of attrition which emits light and heat; every inch of space is disputed by a thousand contestants; instead of walking they all run, instead of controversy there is the fray. And in this

perpetual conflict, all superfluous baggage is thrown aside, everthing is made a weapon of offense or defense, thought stripped of its leaves, language restricted and action hastened; art and life equally bold and rapid, and all encouraged by the great gay voice of the great city, which speaks in shrill, crystalline tones, heard throughout the world.

The more you become absorbed in the study of that life, the more astonished you are in seeing the immense amount of work accomplished under that appearance of universal dissipation. How many workmen labor in solitude; how many prepare, with incredible fatigue, in obscurity—for public combats; how not only every kind of genius, but any particular faculty scarcely more than mediocre, finds this the way in which to exercise itself to its own, and to general advantage; how quickly and spontaneously a circle of amicable and cultured minds (who aid in rising and becoming known) gather around every genius; how the slightest promise of success in the field of intellect awakens in all classes a pleasant feeling of curiosity and respect, eliciting from all that anticipatory tribute of glory which goes so far toward making it a reality; what an ex-

traordinary impulse to human strength is the certainty of the sudden and broad change of fortune which a great success produces there; how grand and intoxicating in that city is the triumph of genius, which, scarcely noticed by her, receives the salutations of unknown admirers and offers and counsels from every part of the globe; how to the man unsuccessful in one direction, a hundred other roads remain open, if he be willing to lower to a very slight degree his pretension to glory; how the forgetful nature of that great city, which, not permitting anyone to rest upon one triumph, obliges all to represent themselves continually at the contest, produces that marvellously busy life, those obstinately warlike old men, whose example inspires coming generations with the passion for work; and in fine, what an enormous quantity of unfinished work, of attempts, sketches, of material spoiled by some, but not useless to others, and of praiseworthy creations in all fields, but condemned to die where they arise, because they are crushed by the abundance of something better.

When one has observed all this, the sojourn in Paris becomes agreeable and useful, if only in

watching the workings of that immense machine, as she polishes, perfects, transforms, squeezes out, and grinds the inexhaustible material of genius, wealth, youth, ambition and courage, which France and the world continually throw under her formidable wheels, and how she casts from the opposite side great names, frustrated celebrities, masterpieces, immortal words, broken bones, weapons, gems, and fragments, which France and the world hasten to gather and comment upon. Censure this Colossus? Cry out against her workmen because they drink absinthe, sing falsetto, and have a woman awaiting them at the door? What pedantry!

But even this is not the last impression which one receives of Paris. In remaining there for some time, one passes through another set of enthusiasms and disillusions. Many an evening do you return home, between those interminable rows of lights, melancholy and weary unto death of everything, with a raging love for your country in your heart. Then you become reconciled with the city on a beautiful autumn day, in witnessing one of those noisy expansions of joy which calm the darkened soul. At another time a little humiliation, a stupid

play of words repeated by a million mouths, a scene of nauseating obscenity, a dark and gloomy sky change the aspect of everything, and such violent antipathies and dislikes arise within you, that you would like to see that city disappear like an encampment carried off by a hurricane. But you will be ashamed of that feeling some other day, in thinking of the immensity of the vacuum in your mind if all that the city has placed there from the time of your infancy to the present day, should suddenly leave it.

Up to the last moment Paris will cause you many annoyances and give you many caresses, like a beautiful but nervous woman, and you will experience all the heights and depths of a passion—to-day at her feet in humility, to-morrow, seized by a desire to bite and insult her, and then again to ask her pardon, so fascinated are you. Yet every day you will find the ties that bind you to her growing stronger. And this you feel more than ever on going away; the evening you pass rapidly for the last time through that immense splendor of boulevards, which is suddenly succeeded by the half darkness of an enormous and gloomy station. Then, despite of the desire you have to see your home, you are seized by

a feeling of sadness at the thought of returning into that dormitory of a city from which you started, and you listen for the last time to the distant noise of Paris with an inexplicable feeling of desire and envy. And from the end of the coupé in the darkness, you see the city once more, as you saw it one beautiful July morning from a tower of *Nôtre Dame;* traversed by the enormous blue arch of the Seine, with its distant violet-hued horizons, immense and smoky, at the moment, when from a square lying beneath, the drums of a regiment sent up to you an echo of the battle of Magenta. "Oh, beautiful and tremendous sinner," you then exclaim, "I absolve thee, and at the risk of the damnation of my soul, I love thee!"

Cool and Refreshing Reading for the Summer Season.

THE GREAT FUR LAND; or Sketches of Life in the Hudson's Bay Territory. By H. M. ROBINSON, formerly U. S. Assistant Consul in Manitoba. With numerous Illustrations by CHARLES GASCHE. 8vo, cloth extra, $1.75.

A SELECTION FROM THE CONTENTS:

A JOURNEY BY DOG-SLEDGE; CANOE LIFE; THE HALF-BREED VOYAGEUR; THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY; LIFE IN A COMPANY'S FORT; A VOYAGE WITH THE VOYAGEURS; THE GREAT FALL HUNTS; THE FRATERNITY OF MEDICINE; THE BLACKFEET INDIANS AT HOME; WINTER TRAVEL; THE FUR HUNTER; A WINTER CAMP; THE FROST KING; A HALF-BREED BULL; A WOOD INDIAN "TRADE."

"Mr. Robinson has admirably succeeded in hitting off the peculiar features of forest life, and in following his graphic sketches the reader is almost made to feel the scent of the odorous woods, and the breath of refreshing air from the breezy mountain-tops. * * * The narrative exhibits a freshness and glow of delineation, founded on a certain novelty of adventure, which commands the attention of the reader, and makes his story as attractive as romance."—*N. Y. Tribune.*

"The Messrs Putnam have published a record of travel and experience in the far North, which, both on the score of novelty of theme and liveliness of treatment may be called one of the most attractive volumes of the season. * * * Altogether, the author has given us a book, which, considering the nature of the information afforded, and the succinctness and spirit of the narrative, is captivating and unique."—*N. Y. Sun.*

"Mr. Robinson's book, it will readily be seen from this, is both an entertaining and instructive one."—*N. Y. Herald.*

"Journeys by dog-sledge, canoe life, the appearance, manners and peculiarities of the half-breed population, the organization of the Hudson's Bay Company, the great buffalo hunt, trading with the Indians, camp life and some other characteristic phases of Northwestern experience are described in a graphic and detailed style, which renders the book very entertaining reading."—*Boston Traveller.*

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS NEW YORK

THE HOME ENCYCLOPÆDIA of Biography, History, Literature, Chronology and Essential Facts: for Libraries, Teachers, Students, and family use. Comprehensive, compact, and convenient for reference. Comprised in two parts. Price in cloth, $9 50; in half morocco, $14 50, sold separately or together.

Part I.—**The World's Progress.** A Dictionary of Dates, being a Chronological and Alphabetical Record of all Essential Facts in the Progress of Society, from the beginning of History to August, 1877. With Chronological Tables, Biographical Index, and a Chart of History. **By G. P. PUTNAM, A. M.** Revised and continued by F. B. PERKINS. In one handsome octavo volume of 1,000 pages, half morocco, $7 00; cloth extra $4 50

Contents: The World's Progress, 1867–1877; The Same, 1851–1867; The Same from the Beginning of History to 1851. United States Treasury Statistics. Literary Chronology, arranged in tables: Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Italian, British, German, French, Spanish and Portuguese, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, Polish, Russian, Arabian, Persian and Turkish, American. Heathen Deities and Heroes and Heroines of Antiquity. Tabular views of Universal History. Biographical Index, General. The Same, Index of Artists. Schools of Painting in Chronological Tables.

"A more convenient and labor-saving machine than this excellent compilation can scarcely be found in any language."—*N. Y. Tribune.*

"The largest amount of information in the smallest possible compass."—*Buffalo Courier.*

"The best manual of the kind in the English language.—*Boston Courier.*

"Well-nigh indispensable to a large portion of the community."—*N. Y. Courier & Register.*

"Absolutely essential to every merchant, student, and professional man."—*Christian Enquirer.*

"It is worth ten times its price * * * It completely supplies my need."—*S. W. Riegart, Principal of High School, Lancaster, Pa.*

Part II.—**The Cyclopædia of Biography:** A Record of the Lives of Eminent Men. By PARKE GODWIN. New edition, revised and continued to August, 1877. Octavo, containing over 1,200 pages, half morocco, $7 50; cloth $5 00

The Publishers claim for this work that it presents an admirable combination of compactness and comprehensiveness. The previous editions have recommended themselves to the public favor, as well for the fulness of their lists of essential names, as for the accuracy of the material given. The present edition will, it is believed, be found still more satisfactory as to these points, and possesses for American readers the special advantage over similar English works, in the full proportion of space given to eminent American names.

"We can speak from long experience in the use of this book, as a well-thumbed copy of the first edition has lain for years on our library table for almost daily reference. A concise, compact, biographical dictionary is one of the most necessary and convenient manuals, and we seldom fail to find what we look for in this excellent compendium."—*Home Journal.*

A BOOK FOR WORKERS, OLD AND YOUNG.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS; or How to Get on in the World. With some remarks on true and false success, and the art of making the best of life, and a number of Biographical sketches and studies given as illustrations of the subjects treated. By WILLIAM DAVENPORT ADAMS. 8vo. cloth extra, $1.50.

A SELECTION FROM THE CONTENTS:

TIME AND ITS USES; AIMS IN LIFE; A STEADY PURPOSE; THE THREE P'S—PUNCTUALITY, PRUDENCE, AND PERSEVERANCE; BUSINESS HABITS; BUSINESS MEN AND BUSINESS NOTES; THE RACE AND THE ATHLETE; SELF-HELP; REASONABLE SERVICE AND TRUE SERVICE.

"The real question for every man and woman to solve is, how to make the best use of life. On this subject Mr. ADAMS has made a most interesting and useful volume. It is thoroughly practical in its character and is rich in interesting personal illustrations and experiences. The author shows a wise moderation and skill in the stress he lays on the tact which sees what is wanting and adapts force to conditions. The book is both serviceable and entertaining and while especially excellent for young men, it is hard to tell who is too old to derive benefit from its pages."—*N. Y. Express.*

"The wisdom of Solomon, Benjamin Franklin, and Stephen Gerard, is here concentrated in a practical essay on the art of getting through the world without starvation, and without discredit. Real success in life is the attainment of a noble object of pursuit. The lesson is enforced by plenty of apposite examples and striking illustrations. Some of the rules which the author lays down are rather novel, but in spite of that show sound practical sense. The author's opinions are sound and healthy, and we can recommend his book."—*N. Y. Tribune.*

"An excellent work to put into the hands of young men who are forming their habits of life."—*Boston Daily Advertiser.*

"The author places his reader under the influence of the best thoughts of men whom the world admits to be the best, and scarcely any man can read the book without feeling his selfish nature rebuked and his better aspirations quickened."—*N. Y. Herald.*

"The success to which the author seeks to show the way is success in making the largest, fullest and best use of life, while the getting of money is rightly treated as a means, not an end, of human activity."—*N. Y. Post.*

"The work may indeed be described as a treasury of biographical anecdotes, classified with reference to ethical uses."—*Literary World.*

"The book is written in a very fluent style. It is bright, lively, and sensible, and the author uses anecdotes and personal sketches to illustrate his inculcations."—*Worcester Spy.*

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS NEW YORK

VAN LAUN. The History of French Literature.

By HENRI VAN LAUN, Translator of Taine's "History of English Literature," "the Works of Molière," etc.

Vol I. FROM ITS ORIGIN TO THE RENAISSANCE. 8vo, cloth extra $2 50

Vol. II. FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE CLOSE OF THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV. 8vo, cloth extra $2 50

Vol. III. FROM THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV. TO THAT OF NAPOLEON III. 8vo, cloth extra $2 50

The set, three volumes, in box, half calf, $15.00; cloth extra, 7 50

"We have to deal with a people essentially spirited and intellectual, whose spirit and intellect have been invariably the wonder and admiration, if not the model and mold of contemporary thought, and whose literary triumphs remain to this day among the most notable landmarks of modern literature." * * *—*Extract from Author's Preface.*

"Mr. Van Laun has not given us a mere critical study of the works he considers, but has done his best to bring their authors, their way of life, and the ways of those around them, before us in a living likeness."—*London Daily News.*

"This history is extremely interesting in its exposition of the literary progress of the age, in connection with the social and political influences which helped to mould the character and the destinies of the people."—*Boston Daily Globe.*

"It is full of keenest interest for every person who knows or wishes to learn anything of French literature, or of French literary history or biography. Scarcely any book of recent origin, indeed, is better fitted than this to win general favor with all classes of persons."—*N. Y. Evening Post.*

THIERS (LOUIS ADOLPHE) **Life of.** By FRANCOIS LE GOFF, Docteur-és-lettres, Author of a "History of the Government of National Defense in the Provinces," etc. Translated, from the author's unpublished manuscript, by THEODORE STANTON, A.M. Octavo, with Portrait, cloth extra. $2 00

This book is written especially for the American public by M. Francois Le Goff, of Paris, a French publicist of the Conservative-Republican school, who knew Thiers personally and who is thoroughly conversant with the history and politics of France. Besides the biographical narrative, which is enlivened by many fresh anecdotes, the writer attempts to present such a connected view of French political history for the last fifty years, as will throw light upon the present crisis in France, so incomprehensible to most Americans. The work will also be interesting as an able defense of the unity of Thiers' political life, a position rarely assumed by even the most ardent friends of the great statesman. It is illustrated by a fac-simile of his handwriting and autograph, a view of his home, etc.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES. First Series. **Contemporary Statesmen of Europe.** Edited by THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON. They are handsomely printed in square 16mo, and attractively bound in cloth extra. Price per vol. $1 50

Vol. I. ENGLISH STATESMEN. By T. W. HIGGINSON.
" II. ENGLISH RADICAL LEADERS. By R. J. HINTON.
" III. FRENCH LEADERS. By EDWARD KING.
" IV. GERMAN POLITICAL LEADERS. By HERBERT TUTTLE.

These volumes are planned to meet the desire which exists for accurate and graphic information in regard to the leaders of political action in other countries. They will give portraitures of the men and analysis of their lives and work, that will be vivid and picturesque, as well as accurate and faithful, and that will combine the authority of careful historic narration with the interest attaching to anecdote and personal delineation.

"Compact and readable * * * leaves little to be desired."—*N. Y. Nation.*